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# CURRENT HISTORY

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## EDITOR'S NOTE:

The title of our lead article, "What's Right with Africa?" may strike some as a question without an answer. The despairing images of famine victims, or those of frenzied crowds dragging through the Mogadishu streets the corpse of an American soldier sent to "help" a country ripped by war and starvation, only reinforce the skepticism whether one can tally a list of African achievements. But as Michael Chege shows, there has been positive change in Africa, especially at the political level, and the continent should not be written off as a patient no one should try to resuscitate.

Perhaps the quickest response to "What's Right with Africa?" is "Botswana." John Holm renders a portrait of a nation politically stable and economically flourishing, one that exemplifies what can happen when African practices are mixed with Western concepts of politics and economics. Despite recent violence, neighboring South Africa also shows signs of positive movement as it heads toward the multiracial elections scheduled for the end of April. Christopher Cramer offers a blueprint of the economic changes that will be necessary to solidify political gains. And Eritrea, one of the many new states that have emerged in the past few years, is off to a bright start politically and, as Roy Pateman shows, has the potential to prosper economically.

But to Eritrea's south fester three examples of Africa's political and economic malaise: the killing fields of Burundi, the military fiefdom of Nigeria, and the political playground of Mobutu's Zaire. Alison Des Forges explains why Burundi has returned to its past after democratic elections were held last year, and Rotimi Suberu analyzes the military's seeming inability to leave the direction of the Nigerian state to civilian politicians. How Mobutu has managed to stay in power, and the intrigues domestic and foreign that have allowed it, are the subject of the parallel essays by Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja and Shawn McCormick.

We end with a look at Somaliland, which has declared itself an independent state but remains unrecognized by the international community; how it has managed to move from conflict to cooperation among competing clans is the subject of Rakiya Omaar's firsthand account.

—W. W. F.

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# CURRENT HISTORY

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"The prophecy of imminent doom in Africa cannot be dismissed, particularly considering the dreadful times the majority of the continent's people are now living through. But it would also be unwise to ignore the signs of hope, which could be amplified over time to allow the region to recover lost ground... The right's current pessimism and the conspiracy theories of the left are inclined to throw the baby of hope out with the bath-water."

## What's Right with Africa?

BY MICHAEL CHEGE

Any objective account of successes at the community and national level in sub-Saharan Africa must begin by acknowledging that the balance at the moment is overwhelmingly tilted in favor of disaster. It must also reckon with the hard fact that both in Africa and the Western world, the stories of civil strife and famine of unprecedented dimensions receive more publicity than those about events and institutions that have reversed social catastrophes and given ordinary citizens an opportunity to improve their lives in a peaceful environment.

Such a report must avoid the ultranationalist position now being voiced in African and some Western intellectual circles that the cascading tales of woe from sub-Saharan Africa are the latest racial assaults on the African peoples by the West and that, even assuming the stories are true, the real culprits are to be found in a conspiratorial European and American imperialist circle hell-bent on perpetuating a baleful "Afro-pessimism" on the continent's inhabitants. For most long-term residents of Africa, like this author, who have to watch and endure in agony the march of locally authored calamity as it ravages one country after another, such explanations seem outlandish and contrived.

A more balanced account must shun such positions with the same vigor with which it distances itself from those at the opposite end of the political spectrum that

portray sub-Saharan Africa and its peoples as a lost cause, now and forever. One of the most widely read examples of the genre was the May 1993 *Reader's Digest* article apocalyptically entitled "A Continent's Slow Suicide." Drawing on a highly selective selection of African disaster cases—a method employed with equal success by advocates of a Western conspiracy theory out to prove perverse meddling by Europe and America—this article proceeded to demonstrate that even with the best intentions of donors and relief agencies, the chances of turning back the tide of continental tragedy were hardly worth rating.

Quite apart from the fact that it would not be difficult to invoke the prophecy of Cassandra for Eastern Europe, South Asia, urban America, Latin America, or any other region after running down a carefully biased list of intractable social and political problems there, the doomsayers' view of contemporary Africa ignores the old homily that every dark cloud has a silver lining. And this includes the political storms in overcast tropical Africa. The silver lining is as much a part of the story as the raging clouds, though not the only reality, as the romantic ultranationalists would have it. And for all their marginality—if indeed they are merely isolated exceptions—the rays of hope should be as scrutinized as the headline stories of collapse and national setback. For within the contours of the silver lining may lie the policy lessons that might realistically be applied toward improving the political and economic conditions under whose shadow a substantial proportion of Africans now live.

Such potential may not be immediately visible to the combatants at either extreme, which may explain why it is talked about only within a very narrow range of

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scholars, donors, and the many voluntary and nongovernmental agencies that concern themselves with Africa. But seeds for action may be found in case studies of African successes—even when the success is highly qualified—particularly in the high-priority areas of political stability, national governance, and economic development.

## DEMOCRATIC GAINS

Beginning in 1990, a new wave of popular demands for democratic rule swept the continent. Yet as shown by events in Zaire, Malawi, Cameroon, Kenya, Guinea, Gabon, Rwanda, Sudan, and Togo, the war against dictatorships has hardly been won. In these and many other countries the heads of government have clung to power through a combination of brute force, manipulation of gullible opposition parties, bribery, crafty exploitation of ethnic loyalties, and cosmetic constitutional reforms to appease Western donors who demand “good governance” as a precondition for further development aid.

Still, there are solid gains that need to be recounted and built on in the quest for fully democratic and accountable government if the momentum is not to be lost. The courage of the independent press in Kenya, as represented by the *Nation* newspaper and the country's new magazines, as well as in Ghana, Nigeria, Malawi, Cameroon, Tanzania, and Ethiopia, marks a new departure. These periodicals run on shoestring budgets and the robust determination of their publishers never to be cowed by hostile authorities. Such spirit is what kept a group of Somali pressmen going—with little more than a mimeograph machine and rolls of paper—at the height of the brutal conflict in Mogadishu. On the whole, the horizons of freedom of speech have widened beyond all expectations at the start of the agitation for democracy.

Neither can the outcome of competitive multiparty elections since 1990 be dismissed as hopeless. Autocratic governments have given way to democratically elected administrations in Zambia, Cape Verde, São Tomé and Príncipe, Benin, Madagascar, Lesotho, and Burundi. French-style presidential elections have brought new faces to power in Niger, Mali, Central African Republic, and Congo. Whenever African voters have been given the chance to choose those who will govern them in genuinely free and fair circumstances, they have opted for accountable and more honest leadership than it has been their misfortune to have had in the past. And despite the undeniable attachment to ethnic loyalty, voters recognize leaders who transcend narrow provincial ambitions. Witness the trans-ethnic and cross-cultural backing for Moshood Abiola in the abrogated June 1993 elections in Nigeria, and the broad-based support for Etienne Tshisekedi, the foremost opposition leader in Zaire. That there has subsequently been violent conflict in Burundi, Congo,

and Lesotho, and corruption in the government in Zambia, does not discount the progress made. The real test lies in developing the institutional capacity to resolve such political differences by due constitutional process.

Above all, the lesson is now sinking in: actions of rogue military units in countries like Burundi, Guinea, Lesotho, and Congo, no less than in Zaire, Togo, Cameroon, and Nigeria, demonstrate the need to bring the armed forces under civilian democratic control. The difficult process of doing so now needs to be discussed and implemented. A courageous start has been made with the unanimous warning in February 1993 from southern African government leaders, including President F. W. de Klerk of South Africa, to Lesotho's restive army to obey the democratically elected government, and with ongoing efforts by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to monitor the army's neutrality in the tortured democratic transition in Burundi.

The vast majority of African countries, in fact, are in this sort of indeterminate transition from an authoritarian order rather than being home to the free-for-all violence of Angola, Somalia, and Liberia that the electronic media brings to Western living rooms so frequently. And the picture of a violent region leaves out the African countries that function normally on both the political and social planes.

Over the last 30 years, the southern African state of Botswana, for example, has been a working pluralistic democracy in which regular elections are held and human rights are respected. Though never a media favorite, the country has a grassroots democracy based on village councils (*kgotla*) and no history of large-scale corruption or civil strife. Next door, to the west, the Republic of Namibia, which gained independence in 1990 after a long war against colonial South Africa, has marched on to stability and administrative efficiency under one of the most liberal constitutions anywhere. Pragmatic and realistic, the governing South West African People's Organization (SWAPO) party ditched the doctrinaire socialist program it had espoused as a guerrilla organization and is busy courting local and international investors as it looks for sustainable policy alternatives that will bring the black majority into the mainstream of agricultural and industrial life. This February Namibia regained from South Africa the Walvis Bay enclave with its deep-water harbor after several years of conscientious diplomatic efforts. Doom-sayers had said Walvis Bay was the powder keg that would set off armed confrontation between South Africa and Namibia.

To the east of Botswana, Zimbabwe, after a difficult political start, has developed a workable formula for ethnic and racial coexistence. All the while the country has maintained a comparatively efficient public service and a nationwide network of roads and telecommunica-

tions, water, power, and sanitation systems that stand out against the dereliction of infrastructure not just to the north of Zimbabwe on the continent but also in many richer nations in Europe, South America, and Asia.

Bold constitutional innovations have produced more decent governance and political stability in other parts of Africa. After years of internal warfare and a succession of brutally repressive regimes, Uganda has since 1986 settled into tranquility under President Yoweri Museveni. His administration has broken faith with the African mythological belief that ethnic loyalties can be replaced by a single national identity and enduring loyalty to an all-powerful head of state of a monolithic government. Museveni has permitted gradual decentralization that includes acceptance of once-outlawed provincial kingdoms such as Buganda, Toro, Bunyoro, and Ankole. Farther north, the regime of President Meles Zenawi in Ethiopia is pledged to a federalist structure that explicitly recognizes the nation's cultural diversity, but it must reckon with divisive movements that violate the human rights of non-natives in outlying areas, and must instill greater tolerance in its own ranks. The government's boldness is attested to by its acceptance of the 1993 referendum in favor of Eritrean independence—the first of its kind on the continent—ending 30 years of bloody separatist warfare.

The president of independent Eritrea, Isaias Afewerki, is representative of the new generation of epoch-making African reformers. At last year's OAU summit in Cairo, he broke tradition and criticized to their faces the incumbent gerontocracy of African dictators for violating civil liberties and ignoring the humanitarian plight of Eritreans during the war. His speech drew the spontaneous applause of the African press corps in the adjoining chamber.

Provided they can overcome daunting initial problems, the new liberal constitutional reformers will lead their countries into the small group of democracies in sub-Saharan Africa that include, in addition to Botswana, the Indian Ocean island of Mauritius, and Senegal and Gambia in West Africa. True, these are small states (as critics of political change on the continent are wont to point out), but it is important to note the swelling of their ranks and to see if this has an effect over time on reformist forces in the larger countries. What will happen on that score will most likely be settled by the leadership that emerges in the coming decade.

The catalog of benighted African autocrats leaves out what is right with many of the continent's local and national leaders. Consider Nelson Mandela, released after 27 years of incarceration under apartheid, offering the hand of reconciliation and a fresh partnership to the white community in South Africa, as Robert Mugabe had done in Zimbabwe and Jomo Kenyatta in Kenya years before. And Mandela did this while

keeping hope alive in his constituents in the restive black majority and building bridges to the war-mongering right-wingers of the Inkatha Freedom party and the Afrikaner Resistance Movement. How many leaders elsewhere in the world can claim to have paid such a high personal price, and to have accomplished so much in such difficult circumstances within such a brief period of time? How many could match the years of patient reconciliation efforts across races and communities carried off with graceful wit by Archbishop Desmond Tutu of Cape Town? And what of dozens of others who have acted as the nagging national conscience in their respective states, among them Wole Soyinka, the winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature, and the Kuti brothers in Nigeria; Archbishop Laurent Monsengwo Pasinya in Zaire; the late Jaramogi Oginga Odinga, the clergy, and the principled legal fraternity in Kenya; and honorably retired heads of government like Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, Leopold Senghor of Senegal, and Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia.

As the lessons of what has gone right with African governance sink in, supreme importance must increasingly be placed on high-quality, principled leadership committed to overhauling the ideas of monolithic rule. In the process, a premium must be placed on coming to constitutional terms with ethnic diversity as an enduring phenomenon—as is now happening in South Africa, Ethiopia, Uganda, and, one hopes, Rwanda and Burundi—without derogating from the principle of territorial integrity and the right to own property and live in peace anywhere in the country. The other challenge lies in regenerating economic growth and raising local incomes so as to give ordinary citizens a stake in the larger system.

## PROFITABLE DEVELOPMENTS

Although the overall economic development record for Africa during the last 20 years has been discouraging, a different picture emerges when one disaggregates the figures to account for individual country performance. Per capita income in sub-Saharan Africa is said to have declined 1.2 percent annually over the period, but a small number of African countries did as well as if not better than the best in the rest of the world.

The economy in Botswana grew at a faster rate in the last two decades—between 7 percent and 8 percent a year—than the much-vaunted miracles in East Asia. With its emphasis on investment in human resources and sound macroeconomic management, Botswana's economy, centered around diamond production, is now branching out into tourism, manufactured exports, and regional banking services. Over the last 20 years Mauritius has transformed itself from a poor country dependent on the sugarcane crop into a full-employment society based on East Asian-style manufacturing and export of textiles and electronic goods. This was made possible by investment from

Asia and Europe. As the country plans a second, deeper phase of economic development, it is moving into offshore banking and new branches of industry.

There are other successes. The region's premier source of development money, the African Development Bank, borrows from African and non-African governments and money markets. It carries a full triple-A rating—the highest possible—from Moody's, Standard and Poor's, and Japan's Credit Rating Agency. Most of its loans have gone into agriculture and public utilities. And in Ethiopia annual profits for the national airline have been good year after year, due to sound management and excellent service. Both the bank and Ethiopian Airlines have enjoyed protection from meddlesome state authorities and employed the skills of local technocrats—a lesson economic reformers must heed.

Despite the portrayal of sub-Saharan Africa as a land of perpetual hunger, some 10 countries—Chad, Cape Verde, Nigeria, Botswana, Guinea-Bissau, Uganda, Benin, Kenya, Tanzania, and Comoros—had what the World Bank termed good to excellent growth rates in agriculture, ranging from 3.5 percent to 20 percent, between 1980 and 1990. Farmers in Burkina Faso have pioneered cost-effective methods of reversing desertification and dispersing of new seeds. A recent study of the Machakos district in Kenya, reported on in the *Economist* last December 11, revealed that, contrary to the conventional wisdom on African development, high population growth rates had not led to overgrazing, soil degradation, and worsening poverty. On the contrary, as the population rose the smallholders of the district had switched from pastoralism to cultivation of neatly terraced farms that halted erosion and produced more for the Nairobi market and for export. To the extent that any outsiders can claim credit, the postindependence government can be cited for its introduction of individual titles for land, high-value cash crops like coffee, and better roads to the capital. In general, a thriving modern economic sector generated jobs, and the savings from those wages went back into agriculture. This has been demonstrated time and again whenever small-scale farming prospers, as in other parts of Kenya and in Ivory Coast and southern Cameroon in the 1950s and 1960s, and as was also the case in cocoa production in Ghana and Nigeria in previous decades.

On the whole, African countries that have a good record in cash crops for markets abroad, such as coffee, tea, and cocoa, have also done well in advancing toward the goal of food production to match the demands of a burgeoning population. And though African economies have been severely buffeted since the 1980s by falling global commodity prices, much has also depended on how they have managed export incomes and sustained farming incentives. Kenya and Malawi, for example, have increased their shares of the

world tea market in a relatively short period of time, principally because of an emphasis on high quality and lowering production costs. The private sector in Kenya has pioneered agricultural diversification into horticulture, while African trade diplomats engage in fruitless efforts to negotiate northern funding for it. Food production in Nigeria, which was in distress in the 1970s, has received a boost from exchange rate and price liberalization since the mid-1980s. Similar effects can be observed in Ethiopia even in the brief space of time after the 1991–1993 dismantling of rigid price controls for farm products and the abolition of the disastrous collectivization program undertaken by the Marxist-Leninist government of Mengistu Haile Mariam in the 1970s and 1980s.

As in the political arena, the lessons to be drawn from successful economic enterprises in Africa are the same as those from other rapidly growing areas of the developing world. Political stability and government committed to tangible results on the development transformation front are vital foundations for economic growth. It is in politically tranquil Mauritius and Botswana that decent governance (and macroeconomic stability) has been harnessed to market-based development policies to produce the best results. The same could be said of Kenya and Ivory Coast in their better days of rapid economic growth in the 1960s and 1970s.

What it takes for economic revival and poverty reduction in Africa is becoming clearer all the time. Once stability was restored in Uganda and Ghana in the 1980s and in Ethiopia after 1991, and accompanied by liberal economic policies and fiscal and monetary discipline, growth blossomed in the ruins. The beneficial impact, of course, will not quickly saturate all of society, but a positive beginning has been made. So long as such wisdom is accepted, and the limitations of current reforms are understood, there must be hope for the increasing number of African countries that are allocating markets a greater role in the national economy than ever before. This applies especially after the devaluation in mid-January of the subsidized African Financial Community (CFA) franc that is used in 13 francophone countries, which caused a wave of urban unrest but will in the longer run benefit the 13 economies.

## AFRICAN RESPONSES TO AFRICAN PROBLEMS

The new setbacks in globally organized peacemaking in Somalia under United States leadership should not be allowed to overshadow promising local efforts in conflict resolution, even though, as in other areas of regional concern, there is still a long way to go. Pan-African peacemaking efforts have not received much publicity, but they continue to save lives and to restore confidence in local societies. Statesmen in the



region must intensify these initiatives while consolidating gains thus far.

In Somalia, community elders and religious leaders have negotiated disarmament and political concord in areas of the northeast, the town of Kismayu, and in parts of the self-declared Republic of Somaliland. After three checkered years for the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) force in war-torn Liberia, the warring factions agreed last year in Geneva to an elaborate peace pact. Despite repeated infringements, a provisional government was installed March 4. Most of the diplomatic groundwork was under the auspices of the OAU and trusted African intermediaries, notably the Reverend Canaan Banana of Zimbabwe and Benin's president, Nicéphore Soglo. But for a shortage of funds at both the UN and the OAU, a neutral African peacekeeping force would have been in Liberia at the beginning of the year, under the command of Kenya's Brigadier Daniel Opande, who served the UN with distinction in Namibia.

Further east, in Rwanda, the OAU played a critical role in bringing the government and the rebel Rwandese Patriotic Front to the conference table in Arusha, Tanzania, in 1992. Implementation of the peace agreement, scheduled to lead to internationally supervised elections last year, has had to be repeatedly postponed, and the process sustained severe setbacks because of the factional violence and assassinations in Kigali, Rwanda's capital, in February. But the agreement presents the OAU in a new role, as a promoter of internal harmony, despite its very slim resource base. In other instances, African diplomats and statesmen have played pivotal parts in brokering the peace agreements that ended the bloody civil war in Mozambique in 1992, and in defusing border tensions like those between Nigeria and Cameroon in 1985 and again this year. They continue to work as representatives of the warring factions in the civil war in Angola and meet in Lusaka, Zambia. In eastern Africa, regional diplomatic initiatives attempt mediation of internal conflicts in Sudan and Somalia.

## HOPE FROM BELOW

The brightest lights at the end of the tunnel in Africa must be those held aloft by ordinary citizens. Africans'

resilience and stubborn refusal to cave in to despair against the odds of despotism at home and an increasingly hostile environment can be ignored only at great cost by those seriously concerned with the recovery of the region. The bravery and determination evident in the refugees returning to Mozambique and among the people of Somalia and Liberia, and the inventiveness that enables Africans to survive in ravaged Zaire and countless other places, demonstrate just how rapidly societies would rebuild themselves if political stability, the rule of law, and a hospitable economic environment were restored.

Although ruin and despair might seem pervasive, history is full of examples in which the turnaround from disaster came much sooner than observers, overwhelmed by gloom, had cared to notice. Revisionist history of the Middle Ages in Europe, for instance, holds that the Renaissance took too much credit for scientific and intellectual discoveries, some of which date back to the often-maligned medieval period. Likewise, as development specialists now celebrate the stunning economic achievements of China, Taiwan, South Korea, Singapore, and those following them, they tend to downplay the intellectual despondency that characterized development studies of Asia in the 1950s and through the Vietnam War. Terms like "dual economies" and "prismatic societies" employed to describe those societies dwelled on the intractability of local cultures faced with the need to accommodate modern development institutions and norms. Today the Confucian ethic and a rediscovered internal discipline can be advanced as the reasons East Asia and the Pacific Rim will economically challenge the West in the next century.

The prophecy of imminent doom in Africa cannot be dismissed, particularly considering the dreadful times the majority of the continent's people are now living through. But it would also be unwise to ignore the signs of hope, which could be amplified over time to allow the region to recover lost ground, should the leaders and thinkers of sub-Saharan Africa decide to do so. The right's current pessimism and the conspiracy theories of the left are inclined to throw the baby of hope out with the bathwater. ■

"The Botswana model is but one option available to African states. In Asia, more authoritarian regimes have promoted economic growth and then had their power challenged by new social groups arising as their economies prospered. In Europe and North America, bourgeois groups used economic independence from the state to create new wealth and then promote democratization. The most compelling aspect of the Botswana model is that it has already worked in an African environment and has allowed democracy and economic growth to emerge concomitantly."

## Botswana: One African Success Story

BY JOHN D. HOLM

**B**otswana is often considered "exceptional" among African states. For more than two decades, this southern African country has enjoyed one of the highest rates of economic growth in the world. At the same time, the government has maintained the only uninterrupted liberal democracy in postcolonial Africa.

Botswana's economic and political successes raise two questions: How were economic growth and democratic development achieved at the same time? And, are there any lessons from Botswana's experience that other African countries can learn from?

### ECONOMIC GROWTH

In the last 25 years Botswana's economy has grown in real per capita terms at an annual rate of around 8 percent. In contrast, the rest of sub-Saharan Africa managed marginal increases up to 1980 and subsequently showed a slight economic decline, although the last few years have seen some increase.

The economic miracle is easily explained in terms of sectoral performance. The discovery of diamonds in the late 1960s led to the development of three mines over the next decade and a half that have made Botswana the world's foremost producer of diamonds. Including a copper-nickel complex, mining now encompasses just over half of GDP; at independence this sector did not exist. The massive surge in income has spurred rapid infrastructure expansion, new mining projects, and an impressive growth in government services.

This growth did not occur spontaneously. The government, especially the Ministry of Finance and

Development Planning, has designed and managed the process through seven development plans. Each plan sets new directions based on development achieved and problems encountered in the previous period. Political intervention is minimal because Seretse Khama, the country's first president, and his successor, Quett Masire, have protected the independence of the planning bureaucracy. To be sure there are occasional exceptions. In the 1970s, for example, government veterinarians with the support of elected politicians managed to obtain funds for a foot-and-mouth vaccine research center despite the fact that this project was not in the current plan. In this case President Khama, who was himself a major cattle owner, decided to side with the vets. But such cases are the exception rather than the rule.

Presidential protection has given the planners in the Ministry of Finance exceptional control over the economy. They set goals for almost all areas, from mining to services, and regulate wages and salaries for the public and private sectors, keeping them relatively equal. The planners also control consumption, particularly by keeping foreign exchange rates low and thus the price of imported goods high. To reduce the inflationary effect of the massive diamond income, they insist on maintaining substantial foreign exchange reserves. Still another tool the planners use to control prices, especially for food and housing, are government-owned enterprises.

The government relies on private and semiprivate corporations to implement certain projects. It engages in cooperative ventures with foreign private capital on major investments. For instance, Debeers, the international diamond marketing cartel, has managed and helped finance the diamond mines. Rhone Selection Trust, a mining multinational, does the same for a copper-nickel operation. The government allocates

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large infrastructure projects to foreign construction companies through a competitive bidding process. Government-owned companies operate the major utilities, the country's airline, and the railroad. They also run the slaughterhouses that process beef for export and a housing corporation that caters to the middle class.

In contrast to many African countries, state-economy relations are encumbered with a minimum of patrimonial connections. In part this derives from the legalistic character of the culture of the Tswana, the country's largest ethnic group, which tends to support rule-oriented, bureaucratic decision making. Most government-owned enterprises receive subsidies, but the Ministry of Finance launches periodic campaigns to lower the amount. Recently it has been campaigning to make them financially independent. Corruption is a recurrent problem; however, newspaper reports and government investigations have brought punishment to wrongdoers and the reorganization of management systems to establish better controls. A current example of this self-correcting process is the National Development Bank, where losses have been skyrocketing. The Ministry of Finance is forcing the bank to reduce its staff by half, including some of those at the top, and mandating a reorganization designed to increase financial controls. At the same time, opposition groups and newspapers are demanding that the bank deal with large uncollected loans to politicians, even some held by President Masire.

Another impressive part of Botswana's planned development system are the social justice objectives that have governed its evolution. Ninety percent of children primary school age attend school. Extensive social services have reached remote areas. While there are many deficiencies in these services, it is not unusual for villages of a thousand people to have a primary school, health clinic, post office, police station, water affairs specialist, community development officer, agricultural officer, and livestock adviser.

During the periodic droughts the country experiences (Botswana is located in the eastern half of the Kalahari Desert), the government activates a far-reaching relief structure to provide jobs and deliver food, water, and other supplies to rural areas. The result is that almost no deaths from malnutrition were reported during droughts in the 1980s and early 1990s. In the cities the government operates a low-cost housing program that has prevented the squatter communities so evident in other parts of Africa. Probably most important for both urban and rural

**Selected average annual growth rate in GDP  
(in percent)**

Country	1970–1980	1980–1991
Botswana	14.5	9.8
South Africa	3.0	1.3
Ghana	-0.1	3.2
Nigeria	4.6	1.9
Hong Kong	9.2	6.9
Singapore	8.3	6.6
Taiwan	n/a	7.7
South Korea	9.6	9.6
China	5.2	9.4
Chile	1.4	3.6
Mexico	6.3	1.2
Venezuela	3.5	1.5
United States	2.8	2.6
Germany	2.6	2.3
Japan	4.3	4.2

Sources: World Bank, *World Development Report 1993* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993) and *Taiwan Statistical Databook* (Taipei: Council for Economic Planning and Development, 1992)

areas, planners have focused on expanding formal employment as quickly as possible. In many cases labor-intensive approaches have been used rather than those that are capital intensive. As a result, employment has grown at three times the rate of expansion of the economically active population.<sup>1</sup>

The success of this welfare-oriented development strategy is evident in evaluations of Botswana's economic performance relative to other African countries. A good example is Botswana's ranking on the Human Development Index (HDI) which the United Nations Development Program has created to measure the changing material living conditions of a nation's citizenry. Botswana ranks higher on this scale than any other country in black-ruled sub-Saharan Africa. In terms of change on the HDI scale between 1970 and 1990, only six other countries in the world and one in Africa (Tunisia) have advanced a greater distance on the scale than Botswana.

Economic performance alone is sufficient to make Botswana exceptional. However, the fact that it is also an evolving liberal democracy makes it even more

<sup>1</sup>Stephen R. Lewis, "Policy Making and Economic Performance: Botswana in Comparative Perspective," in *Botswana: The Political Economy of Democratic Development*, Stephen John Stedman, ed. (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1993), p. 11.

remarkable on a continent where similar examples are hard to find.

## POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT

Botswana's government is headed by a strong presidency that operates in conjunction with a parliamentary system. Parliament consists of a National Assembly and a House of Chiefs, with the latter having only an advisory role on selected issues. The assembly has 34 elected members chosen from single-member districts. These elected MPs select the president, who since independence in 1966 has been the candidate from the Botswana Democratic party (BDP), which has won all national elections.

The president has considerable power in his relations with the assembly. A no-confidence vote dissolves the assembly rather than allowing the assembly to select a new executive. The president appoints his cabinet from among members of the assembly, but the appointments do not require the assembly's approval. Neither of the two presidents since independence has consulted with assembly members before announcing a new cabinet.

Political rights and liberties are generally guaranteed. In terms of the former, most adults enjoy the right to vote; there are few restraints that restrict running for office; and election laws and regulations are enforced in a nonpartisan fashion. Political liberty is evident in that citizens are free to oppose government policies or officials in public assemblies; the mass media faces minimal censorship; and private newspapers disseminate a variety of opinions.

This is not to say that Botswana is a model liberal democracy. There are a number of legal constraints benefiting the ruling party. With respect to elections, the law prohibits chiefs from running for office. The minimum voting age is 21. No provision is made for absentee ballots (20 percent of the adult population are migrant workers). And the constitution allows the rural-based BDP to gerrymander constituencies to the disadvantage of urban areas (in 1989, urban assembly constituencies were 70 percent larger than rural ones).

In terms of political liberty, the BDP government also does not have an unblemished record. It has enacted a law that limits the ability of unions to organize and negotiate (the government has not ratified most International Labor Organization conventions). It threatens newspaper editors with lawsuits from time to time over unfavorable articles. In 1986 the assembly passed a law

that classifies almost all information concerning the Botswana Defense Force.

While the foregoing reduce opportunities for political competition, the BDP and the three opposition parties have considerable opportunity to debate one another. The public follows these political discussions in the private newspapers and in "freedom squares." The latter are critical for the illiterate. Political parties can hold freedom squares on public property as long as police permission is obtained, which is rarely a problem. At these meetings local and national party officials promote their party's platform and attack their opponents, often in incredibly vicious and personal terms. In the weeks before an election, each party holds freedom squares in almost all small villages and in the neighborhoods of larger towns. The high point of a meeting is the question and answer period as members from other parties attempt to belittle the opposing speakers.

Three or four hours may be consumed on a hot weekend afternoon by a freedom square. The atmosphere is festive but competitive. Surveys indicate that freedom squares are the primary source of information on political parties for the attentive public.<sup>2</sup> Newspapers sometimes treat freedom squares in large cities as major events, featuring them on the front page.

Some analysts contend that Botswana is not a democracy because the BDP has swept every election since 1965, winning at least two-thirds of the vote. But there are a number of reasons for the BDP's one-party dominance. Without question, opposition parties, which draw their support more from cities, the youth, and migrant laborers, are constrained by the electoral restrictions. Moreover, some chiefs would like to be more active in opposing the government, but would have to resign their positions to do so.

Other factors limit the opposition vote as well. The three largest opposition parties could win more seats if they united behind a single ticket. In 1989 they might have picked up as many as five seats this way. The major opposition party, the Botswana National Front (BNF), often exacerbates opposition divisions by kicking out one or more internal factions in the year before an election. The resulting conflict then leads to loss of at least one assembly seat.

The most serious barrier to a competitive party system is the ethnic basis of voting in rural areas. There is strong evidence that each of Botswana's ethnic groups tends to vote on the basis of its ties to a party. These ties were defined at the time of independence or shortly thereafter. Thus, the entire Bamangwato area, which includes one-fourth of the population, votes for the BDP in overwhelming (between 80 percent and 90 percent) proportions. The original impetus for this association was that the Bamangwato perceived Seretse Khama, the leader of the BDP in the first election, as the true heir to their chieftaincy.<sup>3</sup> A number of the leading

<sup>2</sup>Mogopodi H. Lekorwe, "The Kgotla and Freedom Square: One-way or Two-way Communication?" in *Democracy in Botswana*, John Holm and Patrick Molutsi, eds. (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1989), p. 225.

<sup>3</sup>Khama did not become Bamangwato chief because the British refused to allow him to do so, fearing that the newly elected Afrikaner government in South Africa would be offended.

royals among the Bakwena, another large Tswana group, used their prestige to foster BDP loyalty among their people.

In some cases, the parties take advantage of subethnic conflicts. Thus among the Bakgatla people, opposition parties have been able to win the major village of Mochudi, which has close to half the district's population, by playing on the Mochudi populace's fear of domination by their less sophisticated rural tribesmen, who vote for the BDP.

The major area of electoral change is the cities. While ethnic considerations are still important, every election has brought a larger number of votes to the opposition parties based on their class and interest appeals. For instance, since 1984 the BNF has won the Gaborone (Botswana's capital city) council and the city's two National Assembly seats by rallying the working class vote. In 1988 the BNF almost won the assembly seat for Selebi Phikwe, a mining city in the heart of Bamangwato. It is very likely the BNF will take this seat in the elections scheduled for October.

UCLA political scientist Richard Sklar has emphasized that democracy in Africa should be looked at from a developmental point of view, and not as something that emulates existing Western political systems. This makes sense with respect to Botswana. A system of accountability to the public is emerging in part as the political elite establishes structures that fit with the existing culture. Thus freedom squares are modeled after the traditional *kgotla*, in which Tswana communities gathered to hear about and react to proposals from their traditional leaders. The support citizens give to political parties on the basis of ethnicity is another example. In their minds the bond of ethnicity is the best insurance that political authorities will listen to them.

Part of this development process, however, is that new social forces are challenging traditional ways by supporting practices that are found in more progressive democracies. Youth and women are demanding access to politics and leadership roles, something that was unheard of in the past. Social class and occupational interests are overriding ethnic identity as a basis for political action in the cities. None of these changes is happening overnight. Rather this widening of the democratic process is proceeding through debates on the advisability and feasibility of making even the smallest reform in reaction to these new social forces. Thus, political change will continue to be more glacial and syncretistic than its economic change.

## THE DUALITY OF ECONOMICS

A striking aspect of Botswana's developing democracy are the minimal linkages between economics and politics. The state bureaucracy attempts to keep economic policy decisions out of the political arena. Equally important, political parties have not organized

to give direction to the bureaucracy on policy questions.

This separation stems from a number of sources. Most critical is the role of the president. Both Khama and Masire have insisted that connections between the civil service and politicians be minimized. To this end, almost all civil servants are rotated every three or four years to different parts of the country. The result is that networks between local politicians and government officials do not have time to form. Augmenting this separation is the fact that top civil servants control advancement through an annual evaluation process. Political interference is rare. This further reduces the motivation for state officials to seek support from politicians. Also isolating the state is an elitist attitude that is widespread in the civil service. Over the last two and a half decades, government has recruited into its ranks the best graduates from secondary and postsecondary schools. This has led government employees to believe they are the only ones who know what is best for society.

Politicians are markedly less well trained. Most MPs have finished secondary school at best. Most local councilors do not even have a primary education. Civil servants regularly take advantage of their advanced training to intimidate elected officials through public displays of literary and analytic skills. They sometimes openly suggest to politicians that the latter's main function is to serve as messengers from a knowing government to an unknowing people.

Further reducing the power politicians hold with the bureaucracy is the fact that political parties have not mobilized existing social organizations to support elected officials. One example of this is the opposition BNF's relation with trade unions. Thus far the party leadership has made no attempt to work with union leaders to mobilize votes, even though the party represents itself as speaking for the workers. Likewise, the BDP makes little attempt to use various rural women's groups such as the Red Cross, the YMCA, and the Botswana Council of Women to gain votes. Both parties prefer to set up their own organizations for social groups they claim to represent. However, these auxiliary party wings tend to sustain the party organizations (the BDP women's wing provides food at local meetings, for example), but do little to articulate societal political demands. In effect, Botswana's political parties are stalling the development of civil society.

The civil service has taken advantage of the parties' lack of contact with civil society to develop its own linkages with citizen groups. The bureaucracy has created a series of advisory councils composed of representatives of various segments of society. These councils deal with topics such as income, education, sports, and women's affairs. Ministries also probe public opinion by using survey research concerned



with various policy options. Most important, local implementation of government policies does not occur until a specific program has been approved in the appropriate *kgotla* presided over by a traditional authority. In effect, the bureaucracy has various means to give legitimacy to its policies, which is particularly useful in the face of politician opposition.

A major advantage of this separation of elected politicians from policymaking is that Tswana democracy does not provide the temptation for corruption so endemic in other African countries. It has given top planners the opportunity to invest the state's resources in productive economic activities. But, increasingly tension is mounting between elected officials and top bureaucrats. At recent BDP congresses ministers and, by implication, the president, have been criticized for their failure to give direction to government policy. In the forthcoming BDP primaries in preparation for this year's election, almost every contest will pit those supporting the bureaucracy against those who believe there should be more political control.

One important exception to the forgoing should be noted. Elected politicians do give direction to the bureaucracy when it formulates policies that could do serious political damage to the BDP's rural constituency. Thus, a rural development program to commercialize large cattle herds has been modified to allow the continuation of traditional management practices. Recently, the Department of Water Affairs shelved a proposal to dredge parts of the Okavango Swamps and channel the water into neighboring villages after the project met with vehement opposition from local politicians. In effect, elected officials veto projects that threaten their reelection.

### AN AFRICAN MODEL OF DEVELOPMENT?

The tendency to treat Botswana as an exceptional state on the African continent misses an important point. If African states are to develop economically and democratize politically, they must confront the problems Botswana has faced. They must mobilize capital, invest it efficiently, make public officials responsible to others for their decisions, and allow open policy debate. In so doing African leaders would do well to consider Botswana's overall approach, although not the actual implementation.

Botswana's economic and political success has resulted in part from some unique factors. Its economy grew exceptionally fast because of the high value the

world economy places on diamonds. Patrimonialism has been less a problem than in other parts of Africa because of Tswana legalism. Some African countries suffer from much more intense ethnic conflict than Botswana does. However, these exceptions do not mean that the basic Botswana strategy of development is not worth considering, particularly if the state is to play a dominant role in mobilizing resources for economic growth.

Four generalizations about Botswana's strategy are most relevant to an African statist approach to development:

- The bureaucratic state should be staffed by a trained mandarin class with a firm commitment to developing the economy. In this context, the state's isolation from society ensures that savings are invested in productive endeavors.
- In the early stages of economic development, democratic institutions should reduce abuse of public power rather than establish policy directions. In this regard, it is more important that elected officials and the media review policy decisions rather than be involved in making policy.
- Political rights and liberty should exist, but citizen demands should not be allowed to undermine the state's capacity to promote economic growth. In the transition to democracy it is important that some form of elections and political freedom exist, but at the same time calls for social and economic justice need to be limited.
- Democratic institutions should both arise from traditional structures and challenge those structures. Democracy and African tradition need be neither mutually exclusive nor synonymous.

The Botswana model is but one option available to African states. In Asia, more authoritarian regimes have promoted economic growth and then had their power challenged by new social groups arising as their economies prospered. In Europe and North America, bourgeois groups used economic independence from the state to create new wealth and then promote democratization. The most compelling aspect of the Botswana model is that it has already worked in an African environment and has allowed democracy and economic growth to emerge concomitantly. ■

"[I]t is hardly surprising that journalists and even policymakers dismissed [Burundi's] tragedy with the usual diagnosis of 'tribal hatred' or—in the more nuanced phrase—'ethnic conflict' between the Hutu, who comprise about 85 percent of the population, and the Tutsi, who make up about 15 percent. This analysis gets the players right and accurately captures their emotions, but otherwise only approximates the highly complex reality..."

## Burundi: Failed Coup or Creeping Coup?

BY ALISON DES FORGES

Last July Burundi was acclaimed as the outstanding example of a democratic transition in Africa. A few months later it had become the most dramatic of disasters on a continent known for catastrophes. The president installed with high hopes on July 10 was assassinated along with several other high-ranking officials in the course of an attempted military coup on October 21. In the next three weeks between 30,000 and 50,000 Burundi were killed, thousands more were wounded, and nearly 1 million—about one-fifth the total population—fled or were driven from their homes. Vast stretches of northern, central, and eastern Burundi lay devastated and empty, fields and forests blackened by fire, houses, shops, and schools destroyed. The violence stunned observers by its scale and suddenness, but for those familiar with the country's recent history, the optimism of July was more remarkable than the despair of October.

Burundi is small and densely populated, poor and lacking in resources that might make it easily richer, located in the heart of Africa and hence distant from European and American centers of power. So it is hardly surprising that journalists and even policymakers dismissed its tragedy with the usual diagnosis of "tribal hatred" or—in the more nuanced phrase—"ethnic conflict" between the Hutu, who comprise about 85 percent of the population, and the Tutsi, who make up about 15 percent. This analysis gets the players right and accurately captures their emotions, but otherwise only approximates the highly complex reality.

The Hutu and the Tutsi are both Burundi, the people of a single nation with a history going back some 400

years; they speak a single language, Kirundi, and share a culture. Not tribes or even ethnic groups, Hutu and Tutsi were once amorphous categories based on occupation: Hutu were cultivators and Tutsi, pastoralists. Now as in the past, Hutu and Tutsi live interspersed throughout the country. At the end of the nineteenth century, Tutsi were usually but not always richer and more powerful than Hutu. Status depended to a large extent on one's relationship with the ruler, who favored Hutu or Tutsi according to his own interests. Boundaries between social categories were flexible. Changes in occupation or wealth could prompt changes in identification. But because Hutu and Tutsi generally married within their own group, Hutu tended to look like other Hutu and Tutsi like other Tutsi.

### THE MANIPULATION OF DIFFERENCES

During the colonial period, the categories Hutu and Tutsi became more sharply defined and took on new political importance, changes described by French historian Jean-Pierre Chrétien in his new book, *Burundi, L'Histoire retrouvée*. The colonialists (first the Germans and then the Belgians) sought to rule Burundi and its northern sister state, Rwanda, through existing structures. Convinced that the complex administrative system only needed some tidying up, they consolidated and simplified it. They reduced the number of offices, also letting go many of the officeholders, systematically eliminating Hutu from positions of power. The Tutsi, they believed, who looked more like themselves, must be superior to the Hutu, and thus born to rule them. The colonialists reserved most of the places in higher education for Tutsi, thus guaranteeing them access not just to posts in the administration but also to the limited number of salaried jobs that would develop in the private sector.

The Tutsi seized the opportunities offered by European support to intensify their control over the Hutu; at the same time, fed by European assurances of their superiority, they increasingly regarded their privileges

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as natural and right. By the end of the colonial era in 1962, the Hutu had begun to counter the myth of Tutsi superiority by advocating a Christian-influenced brand of populist democracy.

At independence, Rwanda exploded in revolution but Burundi remained calm, partly because the ruler continued as arbiter, juggling Hutu and Tutsi in a policy described by Africanist René Lemarchand in his 1970 book, *Rwanda and Burundi*, as "ethnic arithmetic." By 1965, however, the ruler Mwambutsa had been drawn into an ever more active political role and compromised his authority as arbiter by refusing to accept a Hutu prime minister after Hutu won 23 of 33 seats in the national assembly. In October of that year an unsuccessful coup attempt by a small contingent of Hutu soldiers was followed by Hutu attacks that killed about 500 Tutsi. The army, supported by civilian Tutsi "self-defense" groups, responded by killing between 2,500 and 5,000 Hutu.

After the attempted coup, a first generation of Hutu leaders was executed, and the army, now purged of Hutu officers, was on its way to becoming a force virtually all Tutsi among its commanders and largely Tutsi in its ranks. The army then assumed the central role in Burundi's political life that it has held up to the present. Captain Michel Micombero overthrew the monarchy in 1966 and established a military-dominated republic.

In 1972, the Hutu rose up against the Tutsi in the capital of Bujumbura and a number of smaller towns, killing several thousand. The army responded with a repression so brutal as to qualify as genocide. Over several months some 100,000 Hutu were killed, including virtually all with higher education and those still students at institutions of higher learning; leaders and potential leaders were targeted in an effort to ensure continued Tutsi domination. The army employed some new methods, such as helicopter attacks, but resorted once again to using civilian bands to extend its range, sometimes inciting them in radio broadcasts to attack Hutu in their vicinity. As the extent of the carnage became clear, several hundred thousand Hutu fled the country.

In 1976 Colonel Jean-Baptiste Bagaza ousted Micombero. Different players but the same game, with one variation: Bagaza no longer claimed that Tutsi were better than Hutu. He declared instead that they were the same as Hutu—that is, that national unity was and had always been the case in Burundi. To lend some semblance of credibility to this new official line, Bagaza co-opted a smattering of Hutu to serve in government while at the same time working vigorously to undermine the nascent Hutu opposition.

Major Pierre Buyoya, who replaced Bagaza in 1987, initially seemed less than innovative. He stated that the reasons for his coup could be found almost word for word in the justification issued by his predecessor 11 years before. At first Buyoya ruled through a Military Committee for National Salvation that consisted of 31 Tutsi, and like Bagaza, he admitted only token Hutu to positions of power. The number was so small that the Catholic bishop and clergy of Bururi diocese attacked the "deliberate injustice" of the government's anti-Hutu policy—the first time the largely Tutsi Catholic hierarchy had taken such a strong position against the anti-Hutu policies of the government.

Buyoya's regime was shaken by a Hutu uprising in August 1988 in the northern communes of Ntega and Marangara. Hutu and Tutsi had been meeting secretly, supposedly to prepare lists of victims to be killed. Tracts were circulating, including one advising Tutsi to prepare for an impending Hutu attack and another warning Hutu of a repeat of the massacres of 1972. When soldiers and national police were sent to the area, Hutu cut bridges and barricaded the roads to protect their communities from possible military attack. On August 15 Hutu killed a local Tutsi trader and politician, and in the next several days they killed several hundred other Tutsi. The rest of the Tutsi fled, making it easier for the military to launch blanket attacks against the Hutu using helicopters, machine guns, and grenades.

The objective was not to restore order but, as Amnesty International reported, to "punish and eliminate" the Hutu. The government put the death toll at 5,000, but other observers estimated that about 20,000 people died. Another 60,000 fled to Rwanda. The Ntega-Marangara violence served the interests of extremists from both sides. By reenacting the horrors of 1972 it traumatized a new generation of Hutu and gave Tutsi fresh cause to fear reprisals.

The international censure resulting from these events forced Buyoya to seek reconciliation with the Hutu. In late 1989 he chose Adrien Sibomana, the first Hutu to serve as prime minister since 1965, as head of a cabinet that was half Hutu, half Tutsi—the same proportion that would prevail in other commissions and councils named in 1990 and 1991. In establishing what French political scientist Filip Reyntjens called "pacificatory parity," Buyoya had returned to the "ethnic arithmetic" of the previous generation.<sup>1</sup> That the approach seemed so promising only emphasized the futility of the years in between. Buyoya also appointed several Hutu governors and local administrators and had Hutu recruited for positions in the civil service. In addition, secondary school admission examinations that had always favored Tutsi were administered more fairly and this produced an increase in the number of Hutu admitted.

The reconciliation program was threatened in November 1991 when the underground Hutu People's

<sup>1</sup>Filip Reyntjens, *Crises et restructurations dans l'Afrique des Grands Lacs: Essai d'histoire immédiate du Rwanda et du Burundi, 1988–1993* (Paris: Editions Karthala, forthcoming).



Liberation party (PALIPEHUTU) launched simultaneous attacks on a dozen targets, most of them military, in the provinces of Cibitoke, Bubanza, and Bujumbura. As in past instances, the numbers killed by Hutu—at most several hundred—were far fewer than casualties resulting from military reprisals. The government published a figure of 551 people killed, but outside observers estimated the number of dead as at least 3,000.

The army had, however, behaved more like “a force of order” in 1991 than ever before. Commanding officers restrained their subordinates from abuses and units accused of excesses were promptly replaced. But there were troubling accounts of subordinates who had disobeyed orders and continued killing or pillaging.

## THE ELECTION, AND SIMMERING PROBLEMS

Buyoya had launched his reconciliation initiative within the framework of a single-party state but, steamrolled by democratization, he was soon obliged to preside over the establishment of a multiparty system. The constitution of 1992 was a marvel of political engineering designed to provide maximum security for the Tutsi. Members of the Union for National Progress (UPRONA), the former state party, had seen their organization lose strength once it was cut loose from official support, but most hoped the complicated provisions of the constitution and Buyoya's personal popularity would allow them to win presidential and parliamentary elections set for June 1993. The strongest challenger was the Democratic Front of Burundi (FRODEBU), led by the dynamic young banker Melchior Ndadaye.

The election campaign had its flaws, involving some favoritism for UPRONA on the part of government-controlled media and some intimidation of FRODEBU members. Toward the end the parties traded accusations of “ethnicizing” the discourse. Some UPRONA members charged that a FRODEBU victory would mean slaughter of the Tutsi; some FRODEBU speakers linked UPRONA to previous military repressions.

But the balloting last June was universally acclaimed by Burundi and foreign observers as fair and honest. Ndadaye defeated Buyoya decisively, winning 65 percent of the vote. In elections for the national legislature, held several weeks later, FRODEBU candidates received 71 percent of ballots cast. FRODEBU and Hutu generally were empowered by the victories, but most celebrated with moderation rather than euphoria. They wondered whether the army, that formidable force of 18,000 well-armed troops, might not destroy the fledgling democracy. As journalist Catharine Watson reported, Ndadaye assured one supporter, “The guarantee is you, the people. They can kill Ndadaye, but they can't kill all 5 million Ndadayes.” Other Hutu stressed the vulnerability of the Tutsi and predicted that any harm to Ndadaye would mean swift reprisals against them.

The chief of staff promptly acknowledged Ndadaye's victory, and senior officers held meetings at the various military bases soon after to stress the futility of any attempt to take power by force. They insisted a coup would result in universal and immediate international condemnation, with ensuing sanctions, and in large-scale violence throughout the country. But on the very evening of the presidential election several officers approached the defeated Buyoya to broach the possibility of a coup. He rebuffed them. On July 2, officers organized an attempt, and had troops and trucks out on the streets before they were stopped. Five high-ranking officers were jailed, including the head of Buyoya's cabinet. Ndadaye asked associates to downplay the attempt. He let the insurgents sit in prison rather than face a trial that might reveal the full extent of the plot.

Ndadaye took cautious steps to make the armed forces more responsive to and representative of the population they were supposed to serve. The national police was separated from the army and given its own hierarchy in preparation for eventually being moved out of the Defense Ministry and placed under the Interior Ministry. A plan was floated for recruiting candidates for the police according to home province to ensure a more balanced distribution in the new organization.

The new president did his best to allay the concerns not just of the military but of Tutsi like the young men who took to the streets of the capital just after his election to protest the “tribalization of political life.” He installed a government of national unity in which FRODEBU held only 13 of 23 posts, with 6 set aside for UPRONA. Nine of the 23 ministers were Tutsi, as was the prime minister, a member of UPRONA and a well-respected economist. Ndadaye's arithmetic was not just ethnic and political but regional also. He chose five ministers from Bururi, the customary seat of military power—more than from any other province.

At the lower levels of the administration, however, Ndadaye replaced many incumbents with his own appointees, usually members of FRODEBU. He installed new governors in all the provinces, for example, and many new local administrators. Many of those displaced were Tutsi. This aroused Tutsi students as well as those who had actually lost employment. In an economy struggling with the demands of structural adjustment, salaried jobs were few, and it was hard for Tutsi to accept the need to compete with Hutu for them.

Scarce resources lay at the heart of another thorny problem, resettlement of returning refugees. Ndadaye had promised that the 200,000 or so Burundi who had lived in exile—some of them since 1972—would be welcomed home. Local commissions were established to mediate the disputes over ownership that would inevitably arise when refugees sought to reclaim land

they had left. In some places commission members were accused of deciding claims on personal or party grounds rather than on their merits. Recognizing that this was causing growing discontent, the president decided in mid-October that the commissions would temporarily stop work while procedures were reexamined.

During August and September arsonists in several regions burned communal reforestation plots, while mobs elsewhere killed people accused of being witches. The pattern of such incidents was confused—perhaps deliberately so—and created an impression of instability and lack of effective government control.

## VIOLENCE BEGETS VIOLENCE

In early October rumors of an impending coup circulated, and troops spent at least one night on alert. On October 18 the whispers began again, coinciding with Ndadaye's return from a meeting abroad. By the evening of October 20 the rumors had taken on certainty: troops would attack the presidential palace that night. Ndadaye was informed but, reassured by the defense minister, Charles Ntakije, that the situation was under control, he went to bed.

The insurgents rolled up to the presidential palace in armored vehicles at about 2 A.M. and began shooting. Guards inside the walls returned their fire. Much ammunition was expended but on neither side was a soldier killed or even seriously wounded. During a lull in the fighting Ndadaye left the palace in an armored vehicle and headed for the military camp that housed the presidential guard. There, in the presence of many senior officers, the chief of staff, Jean Bikamagu handed Ndadaye over to the insurgent troops. Several hours later Ndadaye was killed, as were four other high officials.

According to military sources, junior officers initiated the coup, forcing their superiors to cooperate. By midday on October 21 the senior officers were sufficiently cooperative to be functioning as a Committee of National Salvation under the chairmanship of a civilian politician, François Ngeze. As predicted by senior officers in their presentations to the troops a few months earlier, the coup was immediately and unanimously condemned by the international community, and foreign donor nations began announcing termination of assistance to Burundi. Also as predicted, violence began in the interior.

When one policewoman in the capital first heard the shooting, she started to vomit, knowing where it might lead. When people in the countryside found only silence instead of the regular 5 A.M. newscast on their radios the morning of the 21st, they feared a coup had taken place, and they too dreaded the consequences. People remembered and repeated the threats made during the electoral campaigns. They relived the agony of past massacres. Many communities followed the

1988 precedent and cut bridges and barricaded roads to stop the soldiers.

By midafternoon on October 21, Hutu administrative officials in several communities had assembled Tutsi residents; in the coming hours they would have them executed. In other places the authorities began inciting Hutu to attack Tutsi in their homes. In still others Hutu appear to have attacked Tutsi with no official encouragement. The following day Tutsi soldiers and police descended on communities where Tutsi had been threatened or attacked, as well as on others where there had been no trouble. They used unnecessary force against Hutu, including both those armed with spears, machetes, and clubs and those who made no attempt whatever to defend themselves. In some communities soldiers used helicopters, machine guns, and incendiary grenades, as they had in Ntega and Marangara in 1988; elsewhere, they arrived in armored vehicles and randomly strafed homes and other buildings. Soldiers and police collaborated in some attacks with civilians, including bands of high school students. Both Hutu and Tutsi pillaged the food stocks, animals, and other property of their opponents, and in many cases destroyed their houses. The shops of local merchants, whether Hutu or Tutsi, were ransacked.

The coup, which began Thursday, collapsed by Saturday. It was disavowed by Chief of Staff Bikamagu, who announced that the civilian government was once more in control. The government, whose members had taken refuge in foreign embassies, said it was too shaken to operate effectively, and launched an appeal for an international force to protect it from its own army. With the army declining all responsibility for government and the government paralyzed by fear of the army, the killing in the interior continued. Local administration crumbled. In some areas officials were assassinated, including four governors; in many others they took flight immediately after they heard of the coup, or when the army arrived.

As the scale of the violence became apparent, people fled: about 700,000, mostly Hutu, to neighboring countries, and another 200,000 to the swamps and forests and camps inside Burundi. Conditions in these camps were deplorable, and scores of people died daily from illness, exposure, or lack of food. Driven by fear of famine if they failed to cultivate their fields during the rainy season, the displaced began returning home in December and January. About 100,000 filtered back across the borders, most of them from Tanzania. Others crossed over from Rwanda during daylight hours to work in their fields but returned to the camps at night.

The refugees impose enormous burdens on the adjacent countries. Tanzania announced in February that it would no longer permit Burundi to flee across the border. Rwanda, which has received more than half

the refugees, has suffered even more than Tanzania. In addition, Rwanda has several hundred thousand internal refugees displaced by a war that broke out in October 1990 between the Hutu-dominated government and the Rwandan Patriotic Front, a Tutsi-led guerrilla movement. Besides multiplying the demands on severely strained resources, the violence in Burundi has complicated efforts at making peace in Rwanda. Those who want to impede compromise with the rebels point to the Tutsi-led coup attempt in Burundi as proof that the Tutsi refuse to live within the constraints of a democracy. Late last year and in early 1994, the Hutu-led government of Rwanda, sympathetic to the Hutu of Burundi, allowed PALIPEHUTU to organize military training among Burundi refugees, in violation of UN regulations.

## BEHIND THE COUP

The insurgents of October 21 issued no statement explaining their objectives, but it is clear they aimed to destroy the democratic government. For this purpose, it was not enough to remove Ndadaye unharmed, as previous heads of state in Burundi had been removed by coups; instead, the president had to be killed. This is why the plotters awaited his return to the country. They executed Ndadaye coolly, after he had been in their hands, defenseless and unresisting, for several hours. At the same time they assassinated the president and vice president of the National Assembly, who were next in line to succeed to the presidency of the republic. This accomplished, they had achieved their goal—even though, as happened soon after, they handed power back to the civilian authorities.

With the assassination of the three people who could legitimately act as president, the government could only function collegially, handling immediate business, until new elections were held. The constitution provided for such elections within three months, except in case of serious emergency. The insurgents could count on a minimum of three months of paralysis under a weak collegial government, and this might well be extended by judicious troublemaking. During this time the insurgents could seek a new formula for government, one that would be both more stable and better suited to their needs. Were the situation sufficiently chaotic, might not even the critical international community relax its demands for a democratic government? In that case, the failed October coup would become a successful coup some months down the road—a “creeping coup,” in the phrase of Filip Reyntjens.

After nearly three months of crisis and paralysis, a constitutional amendment, the dismissal and reinstatement of the Constitutional Court, and several days of violence that left 300 dead in Bujumbura, Burundi acquired a new president in the person of Cyprien

Ntaryamira, a former agriculture minister and a Hutu member of FRODEBU. He named as prime minister Anatole Kanyenkiko, a Tutsi member of UPRONA. Defense Minister Ntakije announced that the new government had the army's blessing.

After only a day, Kanyenkiko was forced to reshuffle his cabinet to add three opposition Tutsi leaders, underscoring the fragility of the arrangement. According to Foreign Minister Jean-Marie Ngendahayo, the three were accommodated only because of their ability to “be troublesome.” He continued, “To avoid more people being killed, we are prepared to associate with the devil.” It is hardly necessary to point out that if the army and police were willing to keep order, extremists would not be in a position to force changes in government with killings in the streets.

Even with the new government in power the situation continued to be precarious. In early March the army killed several hundred Hutu in Bujumbura, touching off new Hutu killings of Tutsi in the country's interior. In these circumstances, no serious efforts were being made to bring to justice those guilty of the assassination or the ensuing violence.

Because the insurgents of October 21 were Tutsi, the attempted coup has been labeled a Tutsi coup. But it may have been more a self-interested coup by soldiers who happened to be Tutsi than a coup to safeguard the interests of the Tutsi as a group. Certainly the plotters foresaw that their plan would mean disaster for thousands of Tutsi, and went ahead with it anyway.

Far from being academic, the distinction has grave consequences for the future. Burundi cannot be partitioned: the country is tiny, and even if some city dwellers have moved into self-segregated ghettos, most Hutu and Tutsi still live intermingled. The army once again dominates political life, but 5 million Ndadayes are still out there. The 1993 massacres were the first in which the number of Hutu and Tutsi victims may have been about equal. This was because for the first time the Hutu controlled a significant number of administrative posts and so had the organizational resources to mobilize people. But it was also because a new consciousness had been sparked by the electoral campaigns—a sense of the sheer numbers of Hutu and of their power as a majority.

The conflict in Burundi is not yet a civil war, if only because one side is an army with weapons and the other a civilian administration with neither guns nor troops. But the region is saturated with guns, and Hutu refugees are being trained as soldiers in Rwandan refugee camps. Unless some more stable arrangement between the two sides is negotiated, the guns and the soldiers will cross the borders and transform this rule by recurrent massacre into a truly catastrophic civil war. ■



"Because of the difficulties the ANC has experienced in trying to assess the relative merits of alternative [economic] programs, there is a danger that economic policy will be more a matter of ad hoc compromises than one of a coherent strategy. . . . The crucial question is whether or not this will be sufficient to lift the economy out of its historical mire and to provide a genuinely constructive response to the social, national, and economic challenges ahead."

## Rebuilding South Africa

BY CHRISTOPHER CRAMER

Post-apartheid South Africa faces two imposing challenges: to form a peacefully united country and overcome the obstacles to economic growth. These challenges are common to all developing nations, but the forceful clarity of apartheid made them more acutely felt in South Africa. Still, in some important ways the country's political and economic development has laid the groundwork for a successful response.

National coherence is in no way inevitable, as is all too clear from experiences in the former Yugoslavia as well as in the division of Czechoslovakia and the rupture of Somalia. The apartheid state in South Africa prevented the development of a strong sense of "nationness" through the coercion and exclusion of the majority of the population. For example, mineral wealth was extracted from the late nineteenth century onward with African labor but the benefits of that wealth were not distributed beyond a small white minority.

Apartheid government also undermined the longer term prospects for national cohesion by creating the so-called homelands, cramming large numbers of people into generally poor lands scattered about the South African map. Some of these were nominally independent but were still sustained by Pretoria's pocket money. Civil war since the mid-1980s between the ANC and Mangosuthu Buthelezi's Inkatha Freedom party, based in the homeland of KwaZulu in the eastern province of Natal, is the most violent expression of weak nationness. But this fragility is expressed also by the bluster of Afrikaner extremists like the

Afrikaner Resistance Movement (AWB), led by Eugene Terre'blanche.

The national problem will not recede fully until South Africa has made headway in tackling its economic crisis. This is the challenge of what the eminent Russian economic historian, Alexandr Gerschenkron, called "late late industrialization." It involves resolving a tension between the promise of industrialization and its rewards, and the obstacles to achieving that industrialization. The promise is clear to most South Africans: the country has great economic potential and an infrastructure that is in parts well developed, and the minority that has so far enjoyed this wealth has enjoyed it ostentatiously. The contrast with the living conditions of most South Africans is astonishing. Poverty in parts of the country is as bad as that in the poorest countries of the world. Urban sprawls outside the large cities are rife with crime, unemployment, disease, and violence. Social divisions are entrenched by a dramatically skewed provision of education, health, and housing; and public services have been implemented in a system of extreme mismanagement and inefficiency.

Although it may be too much to expect a single, coherent policy package to be implemented during the interim government, it is fair to anticipate an injection of funding into housing, health, and education and a policy stance looking fairly on international private investment. The benefits of nonracial democracy will begin to spread quite soon after the April elections, but how widely and sustainably remains open to question.

### REINVENTING THE NATION

The extension of the vote to all population groups has certainly made the South African nation more inclusive. If the April elections lead to a black-led government with ANC head Nelson Mandela as president, it will be possible for nonwhites to identify with the nation-state rather than against it. This should mean, in principle at least, that it will become easier to impose police authority in unstable areas. It should

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also mean, of course, that this authority will be imposed with less brutality.

Ending apartheid and forming a new government will require a complete reimagining of the nation, of what it means to be South African. The social advance that this will represent for most people has to be balanced against the trauma it will involve for some minority groups, especially the more incorrigible Afrikaner nationalists and the Zulu nationalists of Inkatha. Both these groups have at least flirted with the option of exit from the new polity rather than choosing to express their interests and identity through a voice within it.<sup>1</sup> On the fringes of the new nation, groups like Inkatha and the AWB have expressed their material insecurity by taking refuge in cultural, nationalist tradition—insisting on the right to wield “traditional weapons,” sustaining the symbols of cultural identity, be they head feathers and shields or long beige socks and beery sentimentality over the *voortrekker* legend, and protecting the rituals of Zulu spirituality or racist Calvinism.

But even right at the political center of the newly imagined nation the crisis is clear. The very fact of a coalition between the African National Congress and the National party emphasizes the problem of competing collective identities. Two visions of the future have managed to coexist in the uneasy partnership between the ANC and the National party. The core of the National party leadership and its supporters, as well as the core of the largely white-run business sector, has vested its faith in the idea that nothing really will change. The good life of the “sun drenched republic” will continue to be available. This faith has been sustained partly by the ANC’s embrace of pragmatic politics and economics, and by its acceptance of a “sunset clause” protecting white civil servants’ jobs for several years and providing them with bonuses that may soothe their fears but that will also burden the public purse for years to come. For blacks there is a definite expectation that the future will be different, that they will have vastly better prospects for housing, health, education, income, access to jobs, and control over the allocation of resources at the national level. The coexistence of these two perceptions of the future—one of continuity and one of change—has helped glue together radically different nationalist programs. How well they stick depends to a large degree on whether or not the future satisfies both sets of expectations.

The political and social settlement is made even more fragile by the stance of the white right and Inkatha. A minority of whites, largely but by no means exclusively Afrikaner, fears that democratic expansion will mean the end of privileges and subsidies that were or have been economically inefficient. The threat to their lives is more acute because of the economic recession during the last few years in South Africa. When material survival is threatened, the limits of identity tend to contract. White extremist groups (the white right as they are known) have closed in on themselves, wanting no part in a political dispensation that they believe excludes them. So they have insisted on the right to white homelands of their own.

Inkatha expresses a similar crisis of identity and material interest. The Inkatha war is often presented as an ethnic one between Zulus and the Xhosa-dominated ANC. But the fighting has largely been between Zulus on both sides of the political divide. The divide seems more often to be between rural and urban networks of patronage, interest, and coercion. Inkatha support has tended to come from areas where material existence is most harsh and local communities feel least included in the South African nation: poor rural communities dependent on the patronage of the KwaZulu mighty, and migrant Zulu workers living enclosed and insecure in township hostels divided from the township communities surrounding them.

Overcoming this fragmented national identity requires political negotiation and compromise and expansive economic change. Overall economic growth, the introduction of effective measures for regional balancing in fiscal policy, extension of water, electricity, and road infrastructure, expansion of wage labor in the countryside with reasonable living wages, and the growth of the networks of civil society to give some voice to the poorest and most vulnerable, such as rural women—all these are vital to a lasting peace in South Africa. If the threat posed by weak nationness is not contained, it could spread from the edges of South African society and seriously undermine a new administration.

## AN ECONOMY DEFORMED

Every aspect of economic life has been distorted as a direct result of apartheid. Achieving the goals of economic transformation—sustained growth and redistribution—requires a huge array of reforms.

Unemployment is notoriously difficult to estimate in South Africa but runs to a large percentage of the work force, perhaps well over 30 percent.<sup>2</sup> Large numbers of people live in poverty, especially in rural areas. There are extreme inequalities in income and wealth, in employment opportunities, and in access to infrastructural supports. The provision of social and economic infrastructure is badly skewed; and the delivery of these services is staggeringly inept. Educa-

<sup>1</sup>See, for example, Albert O. Hirschmann, *Essays in Trespassing: Economics to Politics and Beyond* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), pp. 209–284.

<sup>2</sup>Among the host of sources available the most comprehensive and up to date are to be found in the Macroeconomic Research Group, *Making Democracy Work: A Framework for Macroeconomic Policy in South Africa* (Cape Town: Center for Development Studies, 1993).

tion expenditure, for example, is lost in a bewildering replication of education departments. The artificial life support system for the homelands has been costly and gave breath to a network of corruption; rarely did this money translate into rational and effective social expenditures.

And yet this is a country with enormous economic potential. A wealthy minority has sustained a lifestyle marked by a propensity for luxury imports (while maintaining a high rate of capital flight in recent years). The economic infrastructure, though inadequate, is relatively well developed and there is a strong skills base along with some massive industrial corporations. These features, combined with a large working class and a high degree of politicization, raise hopes that South Africa can overcome its challenges.

As in some other upper middle income economies, such as Brazil, contrasts between "first" and "third" world conditions are sharp and visible in South Africa. The difference is that they have been more brutally etched into the country's profile by apartheid. One example is electricity: South Africa has one of the most advanced electrical utilities in the world, Eskom, yet well over 20 million people do not have access to electricity.

Government expenditure on health, education, and housing appears high when placed next to other upper middle income countries and even, in some cases, relative to high income economies. A sizable proportion of the state budget is spent on education; a large relative share of GDP is spent on health; and housing also absorbs a considerable amount of spending. Yet these amounts have to be set against the record of achievement. In education, for example, high spending does not make up for the fact that only 35 percent of the adult population is literate. Life expectancy is lower than it is for most upper middle income economies and is equal to the average of low income countries. And the housing system is in profound crisis; there is a massive backlog of homeless people to absorb into formal housing, and the quality of housing and associated services is dismal.

### THREE APARTHEID INHERITANCES

There are a number of pointers to the dire condition of the system that a new government will inherit. Racially segregated schooling is just the most blatant of a number of tensions pervading the education system. School expenditure per white pupil in 1991–1992 stood at 4,448 rand (R), while the figure for African pupils was R1,248. This simple contrast conceals a host of other inequalities. More than 2 million children, basically all African, are estimated not to attend school at all. Pupils in rural areas have far less spent on their education than those in urban areas. Moreover, the education system has been administered by a

bureaucracy renowned for its corruption and for poor management.

The health system relies on a concentration of spending on specialized curative medicine available to the wealthy minority while paying little attention to the needs of preventive medicine and to the links between preventive basic medicine, living conditions, and the productivity of the work force. It is estimated that nearly one-third of South African children are underweight because of malnutrition. In a rural survey of KwaZulu it was found that half of all illnesses were gastrointestinal, highlighting the lack of a clean water supply. The number of people served per available clinic ranges widely but reaches levels as high as 30,000 in some homelands. One severe example of the poor attention to preventive health provision is the difficulty in curbing the spread of AIDS.

A third inheritance is an employment crisis that began in the mid-1970s that has been marked by a striking decline in the growth of formal, enumerated employment in agriculture, transport, and mining. Between 1980 and 1986 the only sector providing growth in informal employment was the public sector. There are no clear or reliable estimates of the size of the unenumerated or informal sector (recent efforts range from the government statistical service's figure of 19.9 percent of the black labor force to a 1992 World Bank estimate of 24.5 percent). Between the informal workers, who typically work in poor conditions and for minimal pay, and those not formally employed and are absorbed into subsistence agriculture in the homelands, there is a significant number of people without work at all. By 1990 more than 16 million black South Africans were impoverished (out of about 29 million black South Africans).

### TRANSFORMATION OPTIONS

The economic policy debate has been characterized—rather simplistically—as the choice between "growth through redistribution" and "redistribution through growth." The weakness of the former option is its echoes of Latin American populist excess, while the latter smacks of preserving the status quo and hoping for the benefits of economic trickle down. The ANC has grown increasingly aware of the constraints on its freedom to meet immediately all its social and economic goals. Along with the other organizations of the broad-based democratic movement, it has been trying in the past three years to develop strategies that can address huge social needs without ruining prospects for macroeconomic balance.

The ANC itself has a set of key policy guidelines but these do not amount to a detailed strategy. They are written into the organization's document, *Ready to Govern*, and into the sixth draft of the Reconstruction and Development Program that the democratic movement alliance had put together earlier this year. These



guidelines support a strong, balanced economy aimed at eliminating poverty and extreme inequality, empowering the oppressed, and creating productive employment opportunities at a living wage for all South Africans.

In exploring how to make these wishes come true, the ANC has looked at the arguments of the four main competing strategies. These were set out before the elections by the National party government, the World Bank, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), and the Macroeconomic Research Group (MERG), an economic policy research institute and training center allied with the democratic movement.

The National party's Normative Economic Model is perhaps the least attentive of all these works to South African reality and the most unquestioningly orthodox economic approach. Its overriding message is the importance of respecting assumably binding constraints on economic policy, and it is basically limited to a set of supply-side mechanisms aimed at liberating the private sector and keeping a fierce grip on inflation through strong positive real interest rates. It warns of the perils of public investment "crowding out" private sector initiative and it assumes a strict balance of payments constraint.

There was considerable criticism within the country of the model's assumptions and the quantitative and methodological weaknesses of its construction. But there was also respect among the business-friendly financial media for the main themes of the model. Despite the calamitous condition of the economy and evidence that policy rather than exogenous affliction was responsible for the depth of the 1989–1993 recession, the government's economic managers continued to command respect from some unlikely quarters. This can be seen in the strong expectation, before the April elections, that the ANC would agree to keep both the finance minister, Derek Keys, and the South African Reserve Bank governor, Dr. Chris Stals, in their posts after the formation of a new government.

The World Bank has played an influential role in the policy debate in South Africa since 1990 through a series of papers on agriculture, housing, the labor market, and the overall economy. Two things are clear from the Bank's interventions. First, the Bank has taken seriously the degree of debate and the importance of the South African economy so that its statements appear less cavalier than those expressed concerning some African countries where it is involved. Second, it is clear that the World Bank recognizes the scale of the challenge faced in South Africa; as it noted in a 1993 report, "The task facing South Africa is similar to that of the reconstruction of postwar Europe, or the unification of Germany in the 1990s. In both South Africa's and these cases, it may be argued that a short-term reduction in gross inequities is required for medium-to-long-term economic growth to reach its

potential in an equitable manner. Therefore, a strategy for a significant transfer of resources during the critical transition period should be considered."

The World Bank has repeatedly if cautiously acknowledged the need for public investment during this transition period and has recognized the potential in the current situation of public sector investment calling forth greater private sector activity. This is in direct contrast to the National party model. In general, the Bank's approach is eclectic, mixing these more heterodox statements with its customary orthodox analysis: the mix is significant in that it appears to represent an effort on the part of the Bank to influence policy direction while making sure that it does not alienate key players and thereby jeopardize its future relations with the country.

COSATU, the country's largest union federation, appealed for a reconstruction accord binding the new government, business, and labor. COSATU policies have been laid out at annual conferences and put before sessions of the National Economic Forum (NEF), which was set up in 1992 as a negotiating mechanism between the government, business representatives, and the unions (though not with direct ANC participation). Some participants saw it as a precursor to a postelection forum with greater significance that would, for example, regulate the progress of a reconstruction accord. COSATU's reconstruction program would offer wage bargaining restraint in return for government and corporate commitment to a series of major goals: job creation; human resource development to extend the skill base and improve productivity; a social wage, including effective social services and provisions such as pensions and unemployment benefits; and the empowerment of civil society with a view to the improvement of the rights and conditions of workers, women, and the rural poor.

Given the close relationship between COSATU and the ANC and the fact that a number of leading COSATU officials stood for election on the ANC's list, there is bound to be some absorption of these goals into ANC policy. Yet the close ties of political history have come under increasing strain. COSATU leaders have let it be known that the unions will not lie down meekly after the election of a democratic government but will continue to pursue workers' interests. ANC officials have at times distanced themselves from COSATU economic priorities, identifying themselves with the need for mature consideration of the whole economy. One sign of potential trouble ahead was the fact that the ANC signed a letter of intent with the IMF in 1993 without prior consultation with COSATU.

Finally, MERG offered its own policy framework for economic transformation. This work was put together with research undertaken by some 13 teams sponsored by MERG in a number of South African universities and

with the support of a number of experienced foreign economists.

Although the MERG plan caused some controversy—because of some hostility in the South African media and the previous government to the insights of foreign economists and because of a suggestion that the central bank should be brought firmly under government control—it was in fact decidedly moderate in its recommendations and projections.

MERG started by committing itself to the policy aims of the democratic movement and by working out the main social and economic needs of South Africa rather than starting from assumed constraints. The plan's stated priority was "to secure rapid improvement in the quality of life of the poorest, most oppressed and disadvantaged people in South Africa."

The analysis and policy recommendations of the MERG framework were backed by a quantitative model illustrating how the objectives might be achieved, with a steady rise in the rate of growth of GDP to about 5 percent per year by the beginning of the next century and the creation of some 300,000 jobs each year. As well as a strong belief in the capacity for several years of demand-led growth, there is detailed attention to a host of supply side reforms, not least the need to make delivery of services more effective. The basic strategy involves two phases: first, public sector-led investment in housing, health, education, electrification, rural roads, and water supply, together with a comprehensive training scheme; this would kick start the economy, increase demand (notably among the black population), and stimulate greater confidence and investment in the private sector, which would then take on the main weight of economic activity.

The document is at pains to stress that its plans are consistent with balanced macroeconomic growth and that they do not involve either an increase in real government consumption expenditure or a surge in income tax revenue.

### THE ANC'S CHALLENGE

As the April elections approached, the ANC was trying to juggle the conflicting interests it wanted to

satisfy or placate with a view to a peaceful transition to nonracial democracy.

Partly because of lack of capacity and an evolving negotiating situation, the ANC had not by the time of the elections developed or adopted a single, coherent economic and social transformation program. It remained committed to a number of objectives while taking a catholic view of the strategies that could achieve them. Certain key factors seemed likely to carry over into the postapartheid transition period and to determine the policy context. Given the ANC's historical resistance to state authority, given its eagerness to attract foreign investment and to win international financial respectability, and given that an ANC government will be constrained by a coalition with leaders of the previous government, the ANC is unlikely to favor a decisive role for the public sector. Thus, for example, it may well disagree with the analysis of the MERG model, though it is clear that it will stay with many of the MERG targets. The ANC will likely keep faith with the private sector, both domestic and foreign. However, this is a serious difference from the MERG recommendations, which are founded on an assessment that the private sector is critical but will not by itself get the economy moving quickly enough to avoid mounting social crises.

Because of the difficulties the ANC has experienced in trying to assess the relative merits of alternative programs, there is a danger that economic policy will be more a matter of ad hoc compromises than a coherent strategy. Such a mix-and-match approach probably will provide some improvement to the economy and to the living conditions of a portion of the population. The crucial question is whether or not this will be sufficient to lift the economy out of its historical mire and to provide a genuinely constructive response to the social, national, and economic challenges ahead. If not, there could either be a switch of policy midway through the transition period or very serious disillusionment with the ANC before the next elections. ■

"Babangida's elaborate political charade," in which a greedy and ambitious military played a large role, "appears to have been constructed on the premise that the excesses of civilian politicians would always provide him with an excuse for extending, modifying, or stalling the democratization project. They never really disappointed him."

## The Democratic Recession in Nigeria

BY ROTIMI T. SUBERU

After several years of growing skepticism over the course of political developments, Nigeria's elaborate seven-year program of transition to democracy finally unraveled in November when the new military administration of General Sani Abacha dissolved all democratic institutions. The lead-up to the collapse of Nigeria's third attempt at civilian rule since independence from Britain in 1960 included the abrupt annulment last June of the presidential election held earlier in the month; the forced abdication in August of the military president, Ibrahim Babangida, after an unprecedented eight years of personal rule; a short-lived effort to paper things over with a military-backed interim national government under civilian businessman Ernest Shonekan; and the supplanting of the interim administration by Abacha, its defense secretary.

The voiding of the presidential election was the turning point in a tragic drama that startled the international community and plunged Nigeria into its worst crisis since the 1967–1970 civil war. The election, in Babangida's own words, was "generally seen to be free, fair and peaceful." Its results also indicated unprecedented nationwide support for candidate Moshood Abiola of the Social Democratic party (SDP), one of the two state-sponsored political parties. Of the 6.6 million votes—half of those cast—counted before the government halted the official publication of returns, Abiola had 4.3 million, against 2.3 million for Bashir Tofa of the National Republican Convention (NRC). Final results released by local and international monitors showed that Abiola, a Muslim Yoruba from the

predominantly Christian south, received 58 percent of ballots cast, obtaining a majority in the federal capital territory of Abuja and in 19 of the country's 30 states, including Tofa's home state of Kano in largely Muslim northern Nigeria. Abiola also secured one-third of the vote in 28 states (8 states more than the constitutionally required minimum), while Tofa obtained a third of the vote in 23 states and a majority in only 11. Yet in what is now widely considered the worst setback for the democratization project in Africa, Abiola's decisive victory was quashed by the Babangida regime, which went on to install a political contraption that finally yielded to renewed military rule.

The factors behind Nigeria's democratic recession include the profoundly dubious and extremely cynical nature of Babangida's transition program, the politicization of the military establishment, and the discrediting of democracy by Nigeria's pathetically rancorous and avaricious civilian politicians. Their ruinous interplay has been compounded by the all-consuming struggle to win political power and its material rewards in Nigeria, and by the fissures inherent in the country's multiethnic composition.

### AN INGENIOUS RIGMAROLE

As internal and external pressures for democratic change have built to overwhelming proportions, many African autocrats, "who are less keen to become democrats than to appear to be so," have begun to conjure up various democratization programs that they persistently seek to manipulate. "The result is often a . . . kind of African masquerade intended to deceive."<sup>1</sup>

From 1986 to 1993 Nigeria was the setting for an ingenious rigmarole—indeed, Emory University Professor Richard Joseph, in testimony in August before the Africa subcommittee of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, called it "one of the most sustained exercises in political chicanery ever visited on a people"—ostensibly designed to institute democracy. Although amazing in its brazenness, the cancellation of last June's presidential election was consistent with Babangida's previous assaults on his own program.

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<sup>1</sup>Dennis Austin, "Reflections on African Politics: Prospero, Ariel, and Caliban," *International Affairs*, vol. 69, no. 2 (1993), pp. 204, 210.



Almost from its announcement in January 1986, the transition program progressively bogged down deeper in contradictions, manipulations, cancellations, and postponements.

The first augury of duplicity came in 1987, when Babangida postponed the scheduled date of the military's final political disengagement from October 1990 to October 1992 and banished an entire generation of past officeholders (the so-called "old breed") from the transition. The pretext for these decisions was the need to ensure a carefully phased-in process, rather than a hasty switch, and to permit the development of a "new breed" of politicians untainted by the excesses and abuses of the political class in the ill-fated First Republic (1960–1966) and Second Republic (1979–1983). The deadline for the military's disengagement was subsequently pushed back three more times.

The program suffered a major jolt in October 1989, when Babangida denied registration to 13 prospective independent parties on the grounds that they were riddled with factionalism, elitism, and ethnoregionalism, and had presented fraudulent membership lists. From 1989 to 1990 the regime proceeded to found and fund the "center-left" SDP and "center-right" NRC as the country's sole political parties. Although later embraced by several politicians, this imposition of a system of two state-sponsored parties on Nigeria's insistently pluralistic society immediately provoked censure from academic observers and alienated diverse elements of civil society from the transition program. These became the advocates for the creation of a sovereign national conference that would chart an alternative and authentic course for the country.

In 1991 Babangida's program was buffeted by three abrupt changes. First, the establishment of nine new states and some 140 additional local government areas in August and September threw the internal dynamics of the parties into turmoil, with vicious intrigues and struggles developing over the control of new local and state party branches. Second, the territorial reorganizations, coming on the eve of a national census and gubernatorial primaries and elections, made a further alteration in the calendar of the democratic transition virtually inevitable; consequently the proposed date for handing over the reins to a civilian president was moved back from October 1, 1992, to January 2, 1993. Third and finally, glaring evidence that several banned politicians were working behind the scenes in the two parties led the government late in the year to admit the futility of its ban on the "old breed" and reverse the policy. But this served mainly to upset the maneuverings that had already begun to crystallize around the contest for the much-coveted presidency of Nigeria. While the December 1991 race for state governorships was dominated exclusively by "new breed" politicians (albeit sometimes backed or sponsored by the "old

breed"), the contest for the presidency now suddenly promised to pit the new breed against the old.

Reflecting the huge stakes and the conflicts that had piled up in the race, the August–September 1992 presidential primaries were riddled with bickering, boycotts, bribery, violence, and gross violations of electoral procedure. But while revulsion at the corrupt and contentious conduct of the primaries was widespread, not many Nigerians could defend Babangida's decisions in October and November to suspend and then cancel the primaries, dismiss the executive officers of the parties and appoint caretaker committees in their stead, ban all 23 presidential aspirants from both parties, and push back the presidential election and the inauguration of a civilian president to June 12 and August 27, 1993, respectively. Babangida's simultaneous announcement that a Transitional (ministerial) Council under a civilian head of government (in effect, a prime minister) would be inaugurated in January only fueled suspicions that he was seeking to legitimize or perpetuate his presidency through the institution of a military-civilian dyarchy and replacement of Nigeria's American-style presidential system with the French presidential-parliamentary model.

The botched 1992 primaries influenced the trajectory of the political program in other ways. Among the apparent front-runners in the primaries were such prominent northern Muslim politicians as retired General Shehu Musa Yar-Adua of the SDP, and Malam Adamu Ciroma, Alhaji Umaru Shinkafi, and Alhaji Bamanga Tukur of the NRC. The regime's decision to bar them from further participation in the presidential race, coupled with the widespread belief that the democratization project had collapsed, almost ensured that there would be no strong contenders for the presidency from the politically dominant north.

Another casualty of the 1992 primaries and the earlier ban that excluded the old breed from the gubernatorial contest, was the maverick politician and Second Republic Senator Arthur Nzeribe of the SDP. Prevented from continuing to take part in the transition, and convinced that the civilian political class lacked the maturity and unity to overcome Babangida's sit-tight tactics, Nzeribe increasingly turned his energies to securing a privileged niche under Babangida's imperial presidency. Along with such other shadowy, state-backed organizations as "Third Eye" and the Committee of Elder Statesmen, Nzeribe's Association for a Better Nigeria embarked on a wide-ranging campaign to extend Babangida's tenure for at least four more years beyond the proposed 1993 handover date. Growing increasingly vociferous and obtrusive as the presidential election approached, Nzeribe's organization claimed that its "25 million members" were opposed to Babangida's retirement, and that the reorganized primaries, held in March 1993, that had produced Abiola and Tofa as the presidential candidates,

had been marred by violations as grave as those perpetrated during the 1992 primaries.

It is, indeed, fairly widely known in Nigeria that last year's presidential primaries were characterized by vote-buying and sometimes sordid horse-trading. Yet the primaries were also remarkably orderly and free of the bickering and boycotts that had disfigured the first set of primaries. In short, while the 1993 primaries may have been corrupt, they were not contentious or acrimonious. The April 5, 1993, edition of *West Africa* magazine said that they were "probably one of the most decent series of elections Nigerians are ever likely to have recorded in their electoral history." Yet it was the alleged irregularities in the conduct of the 1993 SDP primaries that the Association for a Better Nigeria eventually invoked to precipitate the judicial melee that culminated in the quashing of the presidential election.

On the eve of the vote for president last June 12, the association obtained a questionable court injunction restraining the National Electoral Commission from organizing the balloting. When the ruling was defied on technical grounds, the association obtained another one that succeeded in compelling the electoral commission to suspend the announcement and publication of the returns in midstream. Amid a flurry of judicial rulings arising from countervailing legal actions initiated by pro-democracy groups in the south, the Babangida regime intervened on June 23, deposing the electoral commission and invalidating all its actions.

Despite protests and sanctions from the United States and Britain—which he derided as the "global policemen of democracy"—Babangida subsequently affirmed his administration's decision to annul the presidential election in a nationally broadcast speech June 26. He cited multiple specious or dubious reasons, including the use of huge sums for negative campaigning by Abiola and Tofa, authenticated reports of electoral irregularities before and during the presidential election, low turnout (only an estimated 30 percent of the electorate voted), confirmed conflict of interest between the state and the two millionaire businessmen presidential candidates, the need to save the judiciary from being ridiculed and politicized, and the regime's unwillingness to install a president who had "encouraged a campaign of divide-and-rule amongst our various ethnic groups." However, statements by spokespeople for the Babangida government, including Vice President Augustus Aikhomu, clearly suggested that the wily and unpredictable Abiola, now apparently backed by a national mandate, was regarded as unreliable and unacceptable by elements in the nation's notoriously politicized, corrupt, and abusive military hierarchy.

## SOLDIERS OF FORTUNE

There can be little doubt that the political interventionism of the Nigerian military, which has ruled the country for 23 of the 33 years since independence, has led to expansion of the institution's role and political ambitions among its members that make getting the military out of politics a profoundly problematic project.

The first indication came in 1974, when General Yakubu Gowon reneged on his promise to return the country to civilian rule by 1976. Gowon's plan to transform himself into a "civilianized" military ruler was, however, aborted less than a year later, when he was supplanted in a coup. General Murtala Mohammed and his successor, Lieutenant General Olusegun Obasanjo, initiated and supervised the country's transition to the Second Republic from October 1975 to October 1979.

Following the collapse of the Second Republic in 1983, however, the regime of General Mohammed Buhari, which took power in a bloodless coup, explicitly banned public discussion of future democratic arrangements. Growing dissatisfaction with Buhari's illiberal attitude provided the backdrop to the palace coup that ushered Babangida into power in August 1985. Babangida immediately committed his government to a program of political reconstruction and restoration of democracy. At the same time, he, unlike the military rulers before him, appropriated the civilian constitutional title of "president"—a move that hinted at his long-term political ambitions.

As had been true under Gowon, support in the military for Babangida's continuation in power came largely from officers who he had appointed to lucrative political positions, especially state governorships. Better than any of the five military rulers before him, Babangida understood how to use plum political offices, critical military postings, and financial and automotive gifts to create a formidable system of intramilitary patronage. The result, described in the February 21, 1992, issue of the magazine *Africa Confidential*, was an "ultra-loyalist cabal of military officers who never tire of telling Nigerians they would lay down their lives for the Commander-in-Chief," and who had become personally and collectively committed to the perpetuation of Babangida's presidency in particular, and military rule in general.

Abiola was not wrong when he said last June 24 that the "struggle in Nigeria is between the people and a small clique in the military determined to cling to power at all costs." His views were echoed later that month in the widely publicized resignation letter in which Colonel Abubakar Umar, believed to be an ultra-loyalist backslider, declared that "the Nigerian military as represented by our present leadership has become a stumbling block to the development of the nation's democracy."

The emergence of a privileged and politicized group

of "millionaire officers" is having a pernicious effect on relatively junior members of the military hierarchy. It is often said that few above the rank of major in the Nigerian army today do not nurse intense ambitions for political office; in fact, officers now widely and openly prefer political appointments to military postings. Last December the Abacha regime reversed its initial decision to name civilian administrators to the state governorships relinquished by the politicians. Instead, military pressure for political patronage led to the appointment of relatively junior-ranking officers to the 30 governorships.

In an organization of some 4,000 officers and 60,000 soldiers, however, only a privileged few can benefit from the military's corruption and politicization. Thus, somewhat alienated from the politicized "soldiers of fortune"—retired General Obasanjo's term—are the "soldiers of honor," who consider the military's intervention in politics a destructive distraction that is undermining the internal welfare, corporate cohesion, and institutional integrity of the armed forces. The anxiety of these professionals over the military's image and unity acquired particular potency during the post-election crisis last year. This political imbroglio, in threatening to further divide and discredit the armed forces, eventually galvanized open opposition within the military to any further extension of Babangida's presidency beyond his promised handover date of August 27.

Moreover, despite the growing politicization of the generals, formal commitment to a professional military and the idea of civilian supremacy remains strong both inside and outside the armed forces. Babangida's warning that "members of the armed forces must not be found on the other side of the democracy barricade," and Abacha's strictures on the need for the "disciplined subordination of the armed forces" to Nigeria's democratic constitution have also been echoed by Obasanjo.

Why then was this strong formal commitment to the principle of civilian supremacy over the armed forces unable to save the Third Republic from abortion by the military? Part of the explanation certainly lies in the fragmentation, corruption, and easy capitulation of the civilian political class.

## FAULTING THE POLITICIANS

Babangida's elaborate political charade appears to have been constructed on the premise that the excesses of civilian politicians would always provide him with an excuse for extending, modifying, or stalling the democratization project. They never really disappointed him.

After the bungled 1992 presidential primaries, Babangida, in a November 17 speech, dressed down the participating candidates for their inability to "engage in the politics of moderation, accommodation, and con-

sensus-building." They had, he said, imbibed the "worst culture of the Nigerian political class," which, according to him, sees any election as a contest that must be "fought and won at all costs."

This harsh assessment of the civilian politicians was supported by developments during the presidential election crisis. Although some members of the NRC initially appeared ready to accept Abiola's victory, the party eventually endorsed the voiding of the election. Moreover, the NRC also voiced approval of Babangida's bizarre "action package," which called for the immediate organization, during July and August, of fresh presidential nominations and balloting that would involve all previous and/or banned presidential aspirants except Abiola and Tofa! While the SDP was united in its opposition to the action package, it split over Babangida's alternative proposal for the formation of an interim government and the dissolution of all the democratic bodies—local councils, state executives and legislatures, and the bicameral National Assembly—that had been elected in the course of the transition program.

A tripartite committee composed of representatives of the government and the two political parties eventually endorsed an arrangement that effectively did away with the June 12 election but provided for the retention of all preexisting democratic structures and the installation in August of the interim national government as the successor to the Babangida presidency. The 33-member government was named by Babangida and the two parties and headed by Ernest Shonekan, the chairman of the Transitional Council inaugurated by Babangida in January 1993. The "new" government was officially charged with steering Nigeria through the postelection crisis, concluding the democratization process within approximately six months and transferring power to a newly elected president by the next month. But there were also informal proposals that the National Assembly extend the interim government's tenure more than a year, to enable it to stabilize the country and revive the ailing oil-centric economy.

Predictably, the interim government was denounced by Abiola and what came to be known as the June 12 lobby. This opposition effectively polarized the SDP, splitting it into a pro-Abiola faction and a group favoring the interim government that formed around the party's most powerful member, Shehu Yar'Adua, a former leading presidential aspirant and spokesman for the Northern Consultative Group, a bipartisan regional association. This division within the SDP underscored what came to be viewed as the ethnicization and trivialization of the postelection crisis.

Although Abiola won broad voter support throughout the federation, he received overwhelming backing from his Yoruba ethnic group in the SDP-dominated southwestern states of Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun and



Oyo. The tumultuous and fatal pro-democracy demonstrations and trade-union strikes protesting the voiding of the election were largely concentrated in these states, as were the pro-Abiola news organizations the Babangida regime ruthlessly sought to muzzle through repressive decrees and arbitrary closures. Even as the national officers of the SDP were yielding to Babangida's determination to annul the presidential election, the party's leaders and governments in the Yoruba states—and indeed, some elements of the Yoruba rump in the NRC—persisted in denouncing the quashing of Abiola's victory, the establishment of the interim government, and the alleged act of ethnic treachery by Shonekan (like Abiola, an Egba Yoruba) in accepting leadership of the interim government.

As Yoruba members of the SDP became increasingly isolated in their support for Abiola, the NRC remained unyielding in its opposition to the election. Indeed, according to Nigeria's 16 NRC governors, "As far as we...are concerned, the June 12 election has been annulled and any attempts to take any action based on June 12 or revisit the issue under any guise will only invite chaos, bloodshed and catastrophe..." Nine of these governors from the Muslim north went on to accuse Abiola of having campaigned vociferously (successfully, as it turned out) for the disqualification of "our sons" in the aftermath of the controversial 1992 presidential primaries. For their part, the six NRC governors from the oil-rich southeastern area of the former secessionist Biafra threatened to review their association with the Nigerian federation if any concessions were made to Abiola. Accusing the Yoruba of "voting exclusively for their kinsman" and "blackmailing the rest of the country," the governors lamented that their communities had been marginalized in the "current struggle for power in Nigeria, which in reality is the struggle for control of the nation's resources of which well over 80 percent is produced in our homeland."

This sectarian polarization over the annulled election eventually caused convulsions in the National Assembly. On November 2 a coalition of SDP and NRC senators removed the president of the SDP-dominated Senate, Iyorchia Ayu, who had been unrelenting in his opposition to the interim national government and insistence on the sanctity of the election. The hasty impeachment move, widely seen as the work of vested interests within the two parties and the interim government, raised serious constitutional and moral questions.

The failure of Nigerian civilian politicians to unite in opposition to the military's hubris and assault on the democratization process underscored not only the artificiality and fragility of the state-imposed two-party system but also the futility of attempting to build democracy without true democrats. The politicians' conception of democracy as electoral competition

among elites for state power and resources, rather than as a contest over competing principles and policies, eventually contributed to the annihilation of democracy. What is more, an election that might have heralded a new era of nationhood in Nigeria was ultimately reduced, in the frenzied competition for political power, to an instrument for exposing and exacerbating the country's ethnic and regional divisions.

### ABACHA'S COUP AND NIGERIA'S PREDICAMENT

From its inception last August 26, the interim national government faced acute and conflicting pressures from Babangida and his allies, who had hand-picked and installed it as a front and a face-saving device; from Abiola and the June 12 lobby, who persistently and violently questioned its legality and legitimacy; from northern politicians in both parties, for whom it offered a second opportunity to bid for the presidency; and from the military, on which it was ultimately dependent.

Yet, as Shonekan explained, the economic challenges facing the interim national government were even more daunting than political problems. The postelection crisis coincided with, and compounded, a socioeconomic crisis of unprecedented proportions. Nigeria's external debt had increased from \$14.6 billion in 1985 to approximately \$30 billion by 1993. The Nigerian naira (N), valued in 1985 at \$1.20, exchanged in 1993 for N22 and N50 to the dollar at the official and parallel market rates. The annual rate of inflation, which was officially put at between 50 percent and 60 percent, was actually running above 90 percent. Capacity utilization in manufacturing during the three-year period from 1990 to 1993 was typically under 40 percent. At a rate of roughly 2.5 percent since 1992, the annual increase in agricultural output could barely cope with the yearly population growth rate of 2.9 percent. Per capita income fell precipitously from \$1,000 in 1980 to \$340 in 1993. Indeed, a 1993 World Bank assessment placed Nigeria among the 20 poorest countries in the world.

This nightmarish economic malaise undoubtedly owed much to the volatility of the world oil market. Notwithstanding the promise of economic diversification under the structural adjustment program launched in 1986, Nigeria was still dependent on oil for some 80 percent of foreign currency earnings and government revenues. But the bane of the Nigerian economy is financial mismanagement and corruption. In the final year of Babangida's rule, the spiraling annual budget deficits had reached \$4.7 billion, or 15 percent of GDP. More disastrously, the practice of "dedicating" considerable portions of the nation's oil earnings to undocumented, unaudited, and presidentially controlled accounts for "special projects" led to gross financial abuses. In the first half of 1993 alone, some \$1.53

billion was paid into these extra-budgetary "dedication accounts." The state-owned Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation was itself widely denounced as a "fortress of fraud," and seven of its executives were detained in 1993 for stealing several million dollars from the corporation's coffers.

The public antipathy resulting from this financial hemorrhage and other government failings was reflected in continuing popular resistance to official attempts to reduce the massive and financially unsustainable subsidy on domestic fuel consumption, and in protracted strikes by state civil servants, teachers, doctors, and nurses that virtually paralyzed the educational and health sectors during 1993. Last October, a youthful "anticorruption" gang, the Movement for the Advancement of Democracy (MAD), hijacked a commercial airliner on a domestic flight and forced it to land in neighboring Niger. Despite national alarm at this unusual act of terrorism, MAD won broad public sympathy when it said the hijacking reflected the group's "total frustration at the daylight looting of our treasury." Although Shonekan's interim government sought to mollify this social ferment by constantly repeating its commitment to the restoration of probity and transparency in governance, the government's credibility and authority were severely undermined by the ignominious circumstances of its instauration.

General Sani Abacha, the defense minister and chief of defense staff under Babangida, had been named the sole military member of the interim government to provide a military link and to ensure the loyalty of the armed forces during the six-month interim period. However, the apparently politically ambitious Abacha soon established himself as the pivotal force in the interim administration by reversing some of Babangida's questionable military appointments and purging the army of some of the former dictator's more prominent ultra-loyalists. Following a Lagos state high court ruling that pronounced the government illegal, and the eruption of civil unrest in response to Shonekan's imposition of a 600 percent increase in domestic fuel prices, Abacha on November 17 dismissed the embattled and enfeebled 82-day-old interim regime and assumed leadership of the federal government.

Abacha's reimposition of full military rule and the dissolution of all democratic institutions dashed the hopes of several pro-democracy agitators who had earlier sought to pressure the general into intervening politically to bring about official publication of the final results of the June 12 election and Abiola's installation as president. Nonetheless, Abacha's two key governing institutions, the Provisional Ruling Council and Federal Executive Council, incorporate several Abiola supporters, including Abiola's running mate, Babagana Kingibe, as well as leading figures from the two defunct parties and individuals from civil society. Although the

regime has been ominously reticent about the timetable for its disengagement, it has committed itself to the establishment of an authentic and enduring democratic order. But then so did Babangida when he launched the nation on the tortuous search for a new political order in 1986.

Other important features of Abacha's political agenda, enumerated in his November 18 maiden address to the nation, include setting up a national constitutional conference to determine Nigeria's political future, the formation and registration of genuinely autonomous political parties, and the reorganization and reform of such gravely tarnished but critical institutions as the military and the judiciary.

The Constitutional Conference is especially significant in Abacha's agenda. Due to convene in the first quarter of 1994 or thereabouts, the conference is expected to evolve a program for the country's fourth attempt at democracy, and to resolve the increasingly contentious debates on power sharing at the national level, distribution of oil revenues collected by the federal government, the creation of truly national political parties, reform of the federal structure to permit greater decentralization or autonomy at lower levels of government, and recasting of the presidential system to encourage national politics that are not such a zero-sum game.

Strong forces and pressures, however, are arrayed against the Abacha administration. In particular, the government has faced sharp criticism for its sweeping dismantling of democratic institutions, failure to impose a definitive deadline for the end of the military's involvement in politics, attempts to muzzle antimilitary views in the press, and alleged plans to circumscribe the powers of the Constitutional Conference or to use the convention as a ruse to hold onto power indefinitely.

Moreover, despite his daring assaults on Babangida's power base in the military, Abacha is still widely viewed as an accomplice in the financial profligacy and political duplicity of the Babangida era. The new dictator's capacity to launch the political and economic initiatives necessary to arrest the country's creeping descent into ungovernability and disintegration is, therefore, widely questioned.

Finally, opposition to Abacha also comes from Abiola (back in Nigeria after a seven-week flight to North America and Europe in the heat of the postelection crisis), the self-proclaimed "custodian of a sacred mandate, freely given, which I cannot surrender unless the people so demand. . ." As long as they remain in power, Abacha and his regime may have to wrestle with the political and moral implications of trying to fight shy of an election many citizens still consider the freest, fairest, and cleanest in the turbulent history of independent Nigeria. ■

"Zaire must be the only country in the world where the head of state is the leader of the opposition to the legally established government, chief economic saboteur, and coordinator of acts of terror against ordinary citizens."

## Zaire I: Moving Beyond Mobutu

BY GEORGES NZONGOLA-NTALAJA

Four years have passed since President Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire proclaimed in April 1990 a one-year transition from one-party dictatorship to multiparty democracy. Mobutu is still Zaire's ruler. But after three decades in power, he rules over unwilling subjects, retaining his grip through terror and military force. Fearful of his own people, he does not care to stay overnight in Kinshasa, the country's capital, but prefers to live in kingly fashion at his Versailles-style palace in Gbadolite, a new town built in the jungle near the border with the Central African Republic.

Zaire, the third-largest nation on the continent, is endowed with an abundance of natural resources. Its mineral wealth is so prodigious that the Belgian colonialists referred to the country as a "geological scandal." Zaire was also the source of the uranium the United States used to produce the first atomic weapons—the bombs that destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

In spite of its enormous natural wealth, Zaire is today one of the world's poorest countries. The misery of its population has intensified as a result of both the worldwide economic crisis that began in 1975 and the crisis of a decaying one-party state, together with the economic dislocation that entails. Millions of people are now destitute, having fallen into a deplorable state of physical want, while many others desperately seek to preserve themselves and their dependents from this fate. At the same time, the ruling class continues to enjoy a life of luxury and conspicuous consumption, having amassed fortunes that place its members among the ranks of the world's wealthiest people.

In Zaire today, as throughout Africa, there is wide-

spread recognition that the inability of the state to ensure a decent livelihood for its citizens and the lack of democracy are closely related. Thus the struggle for democracy centers on the need to change political structures and processes so that national leaders become accountable to their own people rather than to patrons and allies abroad.

In the case of Zaire, the major patrons of the 29-year-old Mobutu dictatorship are the United States, France, and Belgium. With the United States-initiated assassination of the country's first elected prime minister, Patrice Lumumba, in 1961, the international tutelage under a United States-dominated UN between 1960 and 1964, and repeated interference in its internal affairs by the three powers, Zaire was one of the first countries to experience the bitter realities of the unresolved conflict between the demands of national liberation—genuine independence and economic development—and the strategic interests of the major powers in postcolonial Africa. Consistent with the logic of the cold war, these interests required the maintenance of undemocratic leaders in resource-rich and strategically located countries like Zaire who were beholden to and easily manipulated by the Western powers.

### PAST PRESENT

Radicalized by the revolutionary nationalism of mass-based political parties during the independence struggle, peasants in the Bandundu region of western Zaire saw this conflict clearly, demonstrated by their coining of the slogan "second independence" in 1963. For them, the nominal independence won in 1960 had failed to fulfill expectations of genuine freedom and better living conditions. It was time for a "second independence," one that would free the country from neocolonial rulers and so enable it to develop economically. This is the vision Lumumbist leader Pierre Mulele attempted to systematize theoretically and to translate into concrete terms through armed struggle between 1963 and 1968.

The current struggle for a multiparty democracy can be fully understood only with reference to the first two major periods of the popular movement for democracy

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in Zaire: the anticolonial alliance of ordinary people and the African petty bourgeoisie leading up to independence, from 1956 to 1960; and the "second independence" movement, which culminated in the popular insurrections of 1964 in nearly all regions of the country. Like these, the current era is marked by a great national awakening, with people ready to shed their fears to manifest their permanent aspiration for democracy and their desire for a better life materially and a more secure future for their children.

Other parallels with the earlier periods are noteworthy. The first is the radicalism of the mass of Zairians in the face of the conservatism of their leaders—most of whom have run the country with Mobutu since 1960. Then there is the emergence of a single figure as the standard bearer for and the incarnation of the people's aspirations: Lumumba, then Pierre Mulele, and now Etienne Tshisekedi Wa Mulumba, the "Moses" who is to deliver his people from pharaoh Mobutu.

This most recent phase of the democracy movement began in 1980 when 13 members of parliament, Tshisekedi among them, sent a 52-page letter to Mobutu demanding political reforms. They were immediately met with brutal repression, the security apparatus having learned from its foreign instructors fine techniques for handling political opponents, including torture, intimidation, and banishment. But the group persisted in its opposition to the regime, in spite of repeated jailings and some defections among its original members.

It defied Mobutu's laws against opposition parties by creating one in 1982, the Union for Democracy and Social Progress. Long before Mobutu was compelled in April 1990 by domestic and foreign pressure to accept the idea of a multiparty system, the UDPS had become associated in people's minds with the democracy movement in Zaire. It remains the single most important party in terms of name recognition and emotional attachment for millions of Zairians who appreciate Etienne Tshisekedi's personal courage, consistent opposition to Mobutu, and commitment to political change.

## **THE SACRED UNION AND THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE**

Given the vastness of the country, the breakdown of the road network, and the backward nature of communications, much of the political life of Zaire revolves around Kinshasa and a few major regional urban centers. Party organization remains precarious, and the best gauge of a party's support is the number of people it manages to attract to rallies and demonstrations. Other than the UDPS, the only other party that seemed to do well in this regard in Kinshasa was the Unified Lumumbist party (PALU) of Antoine Gizenga, who served in the first postindependence government as Lumumba's deputy prime minister.

Until Gizenga's return from exile in early 1992, the party was led by Thérèse Pakassa, affectionately known, because of her militancy, as the "Iron Lady" of Zaire. PALU had its antecedents in the progressive wing of the African Solidarity party, to which Gizenga and Mulele had belonged. Ironically, the returned Gizenga, rather than strengthening his party and making it a major player in the democracy movement, espoused positions and took actions that led to PALU's demise as a progressive force.

The majority of Zaire's democratic opposition parties belong to a united front known as the Sacred Union. Under the leadership of the UDPS and Joseph Iléo's Social Democratic Christian party (PDSC), the Sacred Union insisted from its formation in July 1991 on the holding of a sovereign national conference.

Following the example set in Benin in 1990, national conferences have become popular in Africa as democratic forums where all the relevant social forces of a nation can take stock of what has gone wrong in the past and chart a new course for the future. The conferences are seen as a national catharsis in the tradition of the African palaver, as well as an indispensable mechanism for setting in motion a successful democratic transition. This is all the more critical in countries like Zaire, which lack the minimum infrastructure for free and fair elections. The conference, whose decisions are supposed to be binding on all parties or groups, is seen as the appropriate body from which a transitional government can emerge to prepare the way for multiparty elections and democracy.

Such a conference was held in Zaire between August 7, 1991, and December 6, 1992. From the beginning of the conference, Mobutu did everything possible to frustrate the popular will and to prevent this democratic process from proceeding normally. The conference was interrupted in September 1991 and again in January 1992. On February 16, 1992, the death squads of the Israeli-trained Special Presidential Division and the German- and Egyptian-trained Civil Guard opened fire on peaceful demonstrators called out by the Roman Catholic Church and other religious groups to protest the suspension of the conference by Prime Minister Nguza Karl-I-Bond. Condemnation of the massacre by Mobutu's Western patrons combined with pressure at home forced the president to allow the conference to resume. The national conference reopened April 6, 1992, and ended its work eight months later, on December 6.

The 2,840 delegates to the conference represented all social classes and strata of Zairian society. The process of validating the credentials of each delegate took an entire month, with heated debates during many credential challenges. The following month turned out to be much more pleasant, as the delegates and—through live television and radio coverage—the nation listened to more than a hundred general policy statements from political parties, civic organizations,

representatives of state institutions, and distinguished citizens. These were meant to provide the conference with the raw materials needed for its central task.

Having sorted out the major themes from the speeches, the conference divided itself into 23 committees to study the record of the past and to make recommendations. Every aspect of Zaire's national life—from political and economic structures to rights of the Pygmy minority and immigrants—was dealt with by at least one committee or subcommittee. Once completed, the report of each committee was distributed, read at the plenary session by the committee's rapporteur, and debated by delegates. The two exceptions to this were the reports of the committees on assassinations and ill-gotten property, which were never debated following an undemocratic decision by the conference's president, Roman Catholic Archbishop Laurent Monsengwo Pasinya, to spare Mobutu any further embarrassment.

### A COMPROMISING AGREEMENT

Throughout the conference and afterward, Archbishop Monsengwo made it clear he was prepared to go to any lengths to accommodate Mobutu; for him, any compromise was a necessary one if it was the only way of getting the dictator to implicate himself in the democratization process. This explains why Monsengwo went so far as to suspend the reading of committee reports in July 1992 to embark on negotiations with Mobutu outside the conference on the constitutional and institutional framework of the transition.

That such negotiations were a violation of the conference rules of procedure and an obvious way of calling into question the forum's cherished sovereignty did not seem to disturb the prelate. He was successful in coaxing all the major components of the national conference, including the Sacred Union, into talks over a power-sharing formula originally proposed by Herman Cohen, then United States assistant secretary of state for African affairs. Cohen himself went to Zaire to give a final push for this formula and to broker an agreement based on it between the three key political players in Zairian politics at the time: Mobutu, Monsengwo, and UDPS leader Tshisekedi.

The United States-brokered agreement was formalized as comprehensive political compromise, and all parties were to abide by it during a two-year transition period. Under the agreement, President Mobutu was to be allowed to remain in office until national elections in 1994, but with diminished authority; he would become a ceremonial rather than an executive head of state. He also agreed to share power with the prime minister and a provisional parliament, the High Council of the Republic, both elected by the national conference.

As a delegate to the conference, I took the floor on August 3, 1992, to denounce the compromise and call

for rejection of it. My argument was that the agreement was undemocratic, since it had not been subjected to public debate and full scrutiny and approval by the national conference; that it gave Mobutu a legitimacy he did not deserve, given his political and economic crimes; and that a dictator cannot be expected to become a democrat overnight. Monsengwo did not bother to ask for a formal vote on my motion. Like many conference members and those who supported his negotiations' initiative in the opposition press, he believed that such a compromise would avert a bloody confrontation with the dictator. Many who shared this view considered my position extremist.

However, my position has turned out to be correct. Mobutu has reneged on his promise to abide by the political compromise, and our people continue to die in street confrontations with his troops or other acts of violence perpetrated by his murderous thugs. Zaire must be the only country in the world where the head of state is the leader of the opposition to the legally established government, chief economic saboteur, and coordinator of acts of terror against ordinary citizens.

Mobutu's volte-face could be anticipated from August 4, 1992, the day the transitional charter, or provisional constitution, which incorporates most of the major provisions of the political compromise, was adopted by the conference. The president's spokespersons at the conference were quick to register their disapproval, since the charter called for changing the name of the country from "Zaire" back to "Congo" and involved a major transformation of the political system, from a presidential to a parliamentary regime. Humiliated by the proposed change of name, and stripped of the executive powers that had allowed him to reign rather than govern, Mobutu and his entourage decided to subvert, if not obstruct, the transition. But before adopting their final line of action, they attempted to bar Tshisekedi from the post of prime minister, either by disrupting the electoral process or by finding a candidate likely to defeat him.

The firebombing of the Union for Democracy and Social Progress headquarters and home of its president (also the head of the Sacred Union), Frédéric Kibassa-Maliba, in Limete on the night of August 12 was a ploy to disrupt the election for prime minister at the conference. The Mobutuists had hoped that UDPS militants would react violently to this crime, giving Mobutu the excuse he needed to declare a state of emergency, suspend the conference, and regain total control over the state apparatus. Fortunately, my call to Nancy Ross of the Rainbow Lobby resulted in the Voice of America becoming the first broadcasting system to learn of the event, and the first to announce it to their Zairian audience, in the early morning hours of August 13. Voice of America also interviewed Kibassa-Maliba, who called on his followers to remain calm and not respond to the regime's provocation.

## GIVING COMFORT TO DICTATORS

Having failed to achieve their immediate aim through terror, Mobutu and his entourage sought to defeat Tshisekedi, the "people's candidate" for prime minister, with an attractive candidate of their own—Thomas Kanza—and by pouring money for the buying of votes into the People's Palace, where the national conference was being held. But from 5 P.M. on August 14 to 5 A.M. on August 15, Zaire witnessed the freest and most transparent election in its history. Nearly 71 percent of the delegates voted for Tshisekedi, as against 27 percent for Kanza. Few in Kinshasa slept that night. At dawn, hungry and exhausted national conference delegates were met by enthusiastic crowds of citizens who danced and sang in the streets of the capital in celebration of Tshisekedi's victory. "Their" prime minister, they hoped and expected, would implement radical change to improve their lives.

Little did they know that Mobutu and his cronies were now prepared to implement their most extreme scenario, the "Togolization" of Zaire. Like his friend and admirer General Gnassingbe Eyadéma, of Togo, Mobutu was simply going to ignore the national conference and the entire transition process it had adopted, and use force and intimidation to regain power.

During the Tshisekedi government's first three months in office, Mobutu frustrated its attempts to operate by refusing to relinquish control over the central bank, the general tax office, customs, and all revenue-generating state enterprises, such as mining companies and utilities. The president then used the armed forces to bar Tshisekedi and his ministers from their offices, and proceeded to name in March a parallel government headed by renegade Faustin Birindwa, a former UDPS and Sacred Union leader. In other words, Mobutu restored the ancien régime, with the former one-party parliament and his old constitution tailored to his authoritarian needs.

Lack of resolve by the major powers and the international community in dealing with warlords and perpetrators of state terrorism around the world has helped entrench dictatorial regimes like Mobutu's. Instead of invoking punitive sanctions to compel him to stop obstructing the democratization process, the United States, along with France and Belgium, has given him added support and legitimacy by encouraging talks aimed at resolving the crisis in Mobutu's favor. Bowing to Western pressure, the Zairian political class last September once again made the mistake of resuming negotiations with Mobutu. These have led to the merging of Mobutu's National Assembly with the national conference-designated High Council of the Republic to create a monstrous transitional parliament of 784 members.

The new legislature is currently debating two crucial issues: how to rewrite the transitional constitution in a

manner acceptable to Mobutu, who wants to retain most of his pre-national conference powers; and whether to retain Tshisekedi, the prime minister elected by the national conference, as head of the transitional government. As in Haiti, where United States policymakers have given comfort to the military junta by blaming President Jean-Bertrand Aristide—the military's victim—for the continuing crisis, the Western "troika" seems to hold Tshisekedi responsible for the political impasse in Zaire. Washington, Paris, and Brussels would be happy to see him step down so a neutral technocrat could be chosen to help Mobutu run the country.

Having supported the Zairian dictator since 1965, the United States and its allies now see him as an important, and even indispensable, player in the transition to democracy. Coming from a Democratic administration whose presidential candidate promised to fight dictators and whose secretary of state has publicly proclaimed that the future of Africa lies with democrats and not with dictators like Mobutu, this position appears mind-boggling. But on closer examination, it seems to fit the well-established pattern of resolving conflicts in Africa in favor of Washington's European allies. The United States and its European partners are attempting to end the crisis in Zaire on terms favorable to both France, the major power in the region, and the Zairian kleptocracy around Mobutu—a group they have collaborated with for a long time and whose loyal support they can always count on. They do not trust leaders with a popular base, like Tshisekedi, because such leaders are likely to be more responsive to their national constituencies rather than to foreign interests.

The success of Mobutu's counterrevolution is a function not only of his enormous capital of power stored up from the past but also poor political strategy on the part of democratic forces. The Zairian political class made a serious error in accepting the United States-backed power-sharing formula and following Archbishop Monsengwo's initiative in negotiating the comprehensive political settlement of July 1992, as well as in signing this past January the *protocole d'accord* of the most recent talks. There cannot be a compromise with a dictator. Mobutu cannot negotiate giving up power, or even sharing it. More than any other player in the Zairian political arena, he understands that the present conflict between the forces of change and those of the status quo is above all concerned with state power and access to the resources that the state controls. Since losing power is likely to diminish, if not eliminate, the access he and his entourage used to have to such resources, he is prepared to do everything possible to block peaceful resolution of the conflict. ■



"It is important to note that Mobutu has not survived by brutality alone. . . Every one of his prime ministers since the 1991 riots has been co-opted from the opposition's upper ranks. While each of these men was denounced by the [opposition] . . . , the ease with which they were co-opted raises questions about the opposition's fortitude and underscores the idea that Mobutu has 'bought off' an entire generation of politicians during his three decades in power."

## Zaire II: Mobutu, Master of the Game?

BY SHAWN H. MCCORMICK

Since September 1991, when waves of rioting and looting led by government soldiers racked the capital city of Kinshasa, many Zaire watchers have predicted the imminent demise of the nearly 30-year rule of Field Marshal Mobutu Sese Seko. The violence was believed to be a portent of upheavals like those in Romania that swept Mobutu's friend Nicolae Ceausescu from power in 1989. With the explosion of support for political change at home and the curtailing of assistance from erstwhile friends abroad, Mobutu's regime indeed appeared doomed that month, and observers confidently stated that it was only a matter of time before Zaire's strongman was finally toppled.

Today these same observers are often at a loss to explain how Mobutu has been able to retain his grip on power as the political crisis in Zaire continues well into its third year. The economy of this huge Central African country has ground to a halt and bungled attempts at currency reform have led to spiraling hyperinflation, making conditions nearly unlivable in Zairian cities. Sporadic rioting adds to the misery while most of the state's few surviving functions have been paralyzed by popular protests led by fledgling opposition parties (only legalized since 1990). Yet as the situation on the ground has gone from bad to worse and seemingly on to intolerable, Mobutu has remained a constant factor in the political structure. Shuttling between a luxury riverboat yacht on the Congo River and a grotesquely opulent palace near his ancestral village of Gbadolite, 1,000 kilometers northeast of Kinshasa, he stays aloof from the suffering of millions of Zairians. Although his government's authority has been greatly eroded by political deadlock and economic collapse, Mobutu's

rein is as strong as ever, and this has stymied those who would seek to replace him or proclaim his demise.

During the cold war, many outsiders flatly assumed that Mobutu was a puppet of American interests, beholden to Washington for the economic and military assistance it supplied. Today it has become clear that he is no one's pawn and has never been. Even now, Mobutu appears ready to manipulate a new, possibly "democratic" process that would legitimize his continued hold on power. The question for the outside world is whether to play along and on what terms.

### MOBUTU'S RISE TO POWER

When Mobutu took over the government in a bloodless coup in November 1965, his move was quietly applauded by Western nations hoping for an end to the turmoil that had gripped sub-Saharan Africa's second largest country since gaining independence from Belgium in 1960. Colonel Joseph-Desiré Mobutu, the 35-year-old army chief of staff, was a known quantity who had always served Western interests from behind the scenes; he had been particularly valuable in 1960 when he assisted in removing from power nationalist Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba, whose left-leaning proclivities aroused American distrust. The Congo, a vast land with vast resources including strategic and valuable minerals such as titanium, uranium, diamonds, copper, and cobalt, was itself a precious gem that the West did not want to see in Communist hands. For this reason successive American administrations played no small role in backing Mobutu's actions.

It was thus a relief for many, both in the Congo and overseas, when Mobutu's leadership restored a relative calm to the country. He declared himself president of the "Second Republic" and embarked on an ambitious campaign to consolidate his power. Following the legislature's call for its own suspension, Mobutu was legally able to legislate by decree and he quickly banned all opposing political activity. He created his

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own political party, the Popular Revolutionary Movement (MPR), which assumed control of all administrative structures (and eventually the judiciary). The role of the prime minister was melded into that of the president and Mobutu appointed governors for each of the nation's eight newly redrawn provinces. He even went so far as to declare that all citizens automatically became members of the MPR at birth. At the end of 1970, as the ban on political activity came to an end, Mobutu introduced an amendment that effectively turned the state into an organ of his party.

Mobutu also began a crusade of "authenticization" in 1971, requiring citizens to replace their Christian names with African ones. He also changed the country's name to Zaire. "Mobutism" became the official doctrine of party and state: it glorified both the man and his achievements, occasionally even suggesting that Mobutu's power had roots in the supernatural. An elaborate personality cult soon enveloped the head of state, or "The Guide" as he was sometimes called. Mobutu and Mobutism preached a Zaire united, where before there had been factionalism and strife.

Meanwhile, a less evident but perhaps more enduring revolution was unobtrusively taking place within the corridors of government. By careful manipulation of the players on the political stage, Mobutu was able not only to solidify his own power base but to eliminate any prospective challengers. Senior statesmen were exiled, posted abroad, or given local sinecures where they could be closely monitored.

Money and the access to it were critical elements in Mobutu's co-optation process: in return for their loyalty to the head of state, officials were given not only positions of authority but also the right to exploit those positions for financial gain. The development of a 10,000-man-strong nomenklatura centered around the ability of this elite to feed from the government trough; people were routinely rotated in and out of positions that would provide greater access to state coffers. French and Belgian commercial interests provided the backbone of the Mobutu regime's financial support, buying up 70 percent of Zaire's exports (a roughly \$2 billion annual trade). Most of the proceeds were channeled through the nomenklatura and eventually into foreign bank accounts.

Patrimonial allegiance in Zaire has been tinged with regional and ethnic overtones. While Mobutu has publicly vowed to combat "tribalism" in his government, his favoritism toward his home province of Equateur has resulted in the domination of the state by members of a few related and relatively small ethnic groups. Most of the troops in elite units such as Mobutu's Israeli-trained Special Presidential Division (DSP), 90 percent of defense ministry officials, and virtually the entire army high command are Equateurians. This arrangement has helped to keep the government clear of disputes between Zaire's larger

groups and has further served to cement the bond between Mobutu and the state apparatus.

## THE OPPOSITION'S EVOLUTION

Economic factors, not Mobutu's opponents, put the first significant dent in the armor of the Second Republic. Production at GECAMINES, the state-run mining company that provided the bulk of Zaire's mineral exports and up to 75 percent of its foreign exchange earnings, stagnated and went into decline. Copper prices fell sharply in 1974 and failed to recover. Agricultural export revenues were hit by falling international market prices and an upsurge in smuggling (especially of coffee) while manufacturers suffered from inadequate spare parts and a shrinking domestic market.

It was the waning of Western support for Mobutu, however, that marked the end of politics as usual. In September 1987, Mobutu refused to accept a bilateral aid package from Belgium, saying that its terms were not favorable to Zaire. Public criticism of Belgium by the Mobutu-controlled Zairian media began to jeopardize critical business relations. Belgium countered with allegations of economic mismanagement, corruption, and human rights violations in Zaire. A compromise resulted that made Belgian foreign aid and debt rescheduling conditional upon improvements in Zaire's human rights record. This was a serious blow to Mobutu.

Moreover, Mobutu was seen as having outlived his strategic usefulness to the United States when Washington no longer needed Zairian territory as a staging area to supply Jonas Savimbi's National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), which sought to overthrow the Marxist government in neighboring Angola. As democracy became the buzzword for Africa, Zaire's "troika" of powerful partners—Belgium, France, and the United States—started putting pressure on the "friendly tyrant" in Kinshasa, making foreign economic assistance contingent on democratic reforms and an improvement in the government's poor human rights record.

Coupled with this phenomenon came the resurrection of the still-banned political opposition. In early 1988 one of the founders of the disbanded Union for Democracy and Social Progress (UDPS), Etienne Tshisekedi Wa Mulumba (a bitter enemy of Mobutu who had once been his interior minister), began holding numerous political meetings. Mounting dissent in Kinshasa plus considerable nudging by Western countries led to Mobutu's announcement in April 1990 that a multiparty system would be installed after a transition period of one year. A new constitution was to be drafted to lay the foundations of Zaire's "Third Republic." Both presidential and legislative elections were scheduled and the ruling MPR's domination of public life was to be curtailed.

Unfortunately for Zaire, the reforms announced in the spring of 1990 were doomed from the beginning. Only weeks after Mobutu's proclamation of change, security forces attacked and killed students at Lumumbashi University following a day of anti-Mobutu demonstrations. Foreign faculty members estimated that as many as 150 students were killed; rumors circulated that the attack came on direct presidential orders. For its part the government denied that serious violence had taken place, putting the death toll at 1 with 13 injuries, and it blamed the disturbance on "unruly" students. Calls by foreign governments and human rights organizations for an investigation into the incident only strengthened Kinshasa's resolve to act as though it had never happened. Belgium froze all bilateral assistance; its 700 aid workers were expelled in retaliation for their country's "meddling" in Zaire's internal affairs.

### THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE

The next stage of the struggle for power came in early 1991, when Mobutu announced that he would convene a national conference, representing various state, opposition, and religious interests, to hammer out a new constitution that would be put before a nationwide referendum. During the period leading up to the national conference, the three principal opposition groups joined together to form Sacred Union, a coalition that grew to 130 parties with UDPS leader Tshisekedi at the top.

Under international pressure (primarily from the United States), Mobutu offered the post of prime minister to Tshisekedi, who turned it down at his party's insistence. The movement's gathering momentum caused opposition leaders to change their tactics: they dropped their demand for Mobutu's resignation and decided to participate in the national conference, believing that they had an opportunity to vie for power on a level democratic playing field. They were wrong. When the conference opened in August 1991 it became clear that Mobutu was playing at "democracy" by his own rules. Less than a third of the 2,850 conference delegates came from opposition parties. The hostile climate at the negotiations soon precluded genuine progress toward reform as talks dissolved into political infighting and posturing.

During the last week of September Kinshasa erupted in widespread rioting, initiated by disaffected troops of the 31st Parachutist Brigade, which soon spread throughout the capital. Other cities and towns suffered similar disturbances. France and Belgium sent a combined force of about 2,000 paratroopers to Kinshasa to evacuate expatriates and restore order. About 20,000 foreign residents, many of them merchants and technicians in vital industries, left the country that week—an immeasurable loss for the Zairian economy.

For the first time public resentment was a grave

threat to the security of the Mobutu regime. The troika of Western powers stepped-up calls for reform, and in response on October 2 Mobutu appointed Tshisekedi to head a new government. The move only increased friction between the two men, however: Tshisekedi's attempt to take control of the central bank resulted in his dismissal just 12 days after his appointment. He was replaced by the opportunistic former Commissioner for Foreign Affairs and Ambassador to Washington Nguza Karl-I-Bond.

The crisis continued into 1992 with Mobutu alternately reopening and suspending the national conference, which had become a virtual rival government under the Sacred Union. The conference elected Tshisekedi to head his own transitional government. Throughout the year the conference and the presidency competed for authority and wrangled over the issue of executive powers under the new constitution; the conference advocated a head of state with mainly symbolic functions, an option Mobutu adamantly opposed. Although he had played along with the conference's self-declared authority for the most part, by December 1992 Mobutu had no more tolerance for its actions and he attempted to dissolve the Tshisekedi government once again. This time the conference ignored the attempt, and a few days later it gave way to a 453-member replacement body it had created, the High Council of the Republic (HCR), which boasted the power not only to draft but also to adopt and implement the new constitution and to organize elections. Mobutu announced the suspension of the HCR.

On January 28, 1993, disaffected troops again went on the rampage in Kinshasa. This time they objected to the currency they had been paid: the new 5-million-zaire notes had already been made worthless by skyrocketing inflation, estimated at between 1,000 and 6,000 percent annually. Mobutu sent in the DSP to quell the riots, and the ensuing melees resulted in at least 65 dead, most of them soldiers. Several innocent bystanders were also killed, including the French ambassador to Zaire, who was shot while watching events from his office window.

On February 5 Mobutu announced that for the third time he was dismissing Tshisekedi, whom he blamed for the riots. Tshisekedi again refused to step down, saying that the president had no authority to sack someone appointed by the High Council of the Republic. This situation led to a standoff between parallel governments that continued throughout 1993. In March Mobutu organized a "conclave" of loyal politicians who proceeded to appoint their own cabinet and name their own prime minister, Faustin Birindwa, to lead a "government of national salvation." Mobutu also resurrected Zaire's long-defunct National Assembly—a move without any legal standing—and filled it with his supporters. Tshisekedi's government won the



backing of the HCR while Western governments refused to accept the conclave-appointed regime.

A resolution of sorts came about this January. Representatives of Mobutu's conclave and the Sacred Union signed a compromise accord that created a "Parliament of Transition" by amalgamating the opposition-dominated High Council of the Republic with Mobutu's National Assembly. Many of the more radical opposition factions, including Tshisekedi's, objected strenuously to the plan. One leader dubbed it "a constitutional coup."

## MOBUTU'S STRATEGIES FOR SURVIVAL

Critics of the Mobutu regime cite brutality as its chief means of maintaining control. Widespread civil strife has been used to mask calculated acts of violence against opposition leaders, who have been the targets of a full-fledged campaign of intimidation since late 1992. Soldiers have repeatedly surrounded the homes of Tshisekedi and his ministers; other opposition members have been abducted by secret policemen.

It is important to note that Mobutu has not survived by brutality alone. He has proven himself an expert at playing his opponents against each other and rendering them powerless. Every one of his prime ministers since the 1991 riots has been co-opted from the opposition's upper ranks. While each of these men was denounced by the Sacred Union for their "political truancy," the ease with which they were co-opted raises questions about the opposition's fortitude and underscores the idea that Mobutu has "bought off" an entire generation of politicians during his three decades in power.

Mobutu also exploits tensions between Zaire's many ethnic groups to ensure his own political longevity. He has often claimed that he is the only man strong enough to unite such a large country with so many disparate peoples. Foreign observers such as Amnesty International, however, accuse government security forces of instigating unrest and colluding with those responsible for the massacres of thousands of civilians. In the mineral-rich province of Shaba (or Katanga), Mobutu's crony Nguza Karl-I-Bond and governor Kyungu Wa Kumwanza have been fomenting discord between ethnic Katangese and those descended from immigrants from the neighboring Kasai provinces. Over 200,000 persons of Kasaian descent have been forced to leave their homes in Shaba since 1992—Zaire's own example of large-scale "ethnic cleansing." Another 150,000 have been displaced in the eastern Kivu province, the scene of heavy fighting between local ethnic groups and people of Rwandan origin. The chaos created by such massive social unrest surely helps keep Mobutu in power and his opponents off guard.

The final factor in Mobutu's favor is his control of the central bank, and therefore Zaire's economic resources. Today the government is bankrupt, lacking even the money to pay the European printers of its worthless currency. As desperate as the situation is, though, Mobutu has one guaranteed source of income: the illicit diamond trade. Mobutu's opponents have calculated that \$300 million worth of diamonds were smuggled out of the country in 1992. In a dangerous bid to replenish his coffers, Mobutu has also reportedly begun laundering drug money for Latin American narcoterrorists. Economically speaking, Mobutu holds virtually all the cards to be held in Zaire while his opponents have difficulty bluffing.

## TSHISEKEDI'S SUPPORT FALTERS

Until recently, most Western governments and particularly the troika were committed to Tshisekedi as the rightful and democratic heir to the Zairian presidency. But since last fall his status in the eyes of foreign powers has become more ambiguous. By November the French had withdrawn their support from his claim to legitimacy, and this January French Cooperation Minister Michel Roussin said he hoped that a "third path" toward resolution could be found between the poles of Mobutu and Tshisekedi. Such actions have earned France the ire of the UDPS leadership but they are indicative of increasingly negative sentiment in the West toward Tshisekedi.

One objection raised against Mobutu's chief opponent is that he has not conducted himself as a model democrat. On repeated occasions during his tenure at the head of the opposition government he has refused to abide by the dictates of the transitional charter created by the National Conference. His unwillingness to compromise has led him into frequent conflict with Archbishop Laurent Monsengwo Pasinya, the successive chair of the National Conference and the HCR. His UDPS party newspaper even accused the archbishop (who has constantly proven his fairness) of personal political ambitions and of "plotting Tshisekedi's downfall."

The UDPS leader's performance in the opposition arena raises questions about his somewhat checkered past. He served the Mobutu regime for several years in the 1960s and 1970s and rose to the rank of minister of the interior, a fact that raises doubts about his political credibility. Herman Cohen, the United States' former assistant secretary of state for African affairs, underscored this skepticism in testimony before a congressional committee last October. "Frankly," he said, "as I look at Prime Minister Tshisekedi and the other opposition political leaders, courageous as they have been, I do not see any new blood. I see many of the same tired old politicians who were very happy to feed at the public trough throughout the Mobutu years."

## A WAY FORWARD

After Western nations retrieved their foreign nationals and assessed that their economic assets were worthless or irretrievable, the nation of Zaire no longer held strategic importance and the additional complexities of Zairian politics proved far too great a barrier for active involvement. In essence, the West adopted a policy of abandonment when it perceived that its interests were no longer at stake.

It has become easy and politically correct to say that Mobutu should depart the political scene before any normalization of relations can occur. An honest assessment leads one to the conclusion that short of Mobutu's death (he is only 64), this once stalwart ally of the West is a permanent fixture on Zaire's landscape for the foreseeable future and must be dealt with if a peaceful resolution is to be found. This presents two simple choices: the West can either continue its condemnations and wait until Mobutu dies, or it can accept the facts of Zairian political culture and decide that a continued slide toward the abyss is unacceptable. This latter path could in turn lead toward involvement in a process restoring international legitimacy to Zairian political culture.

To those who adamantly believe that no solution is possible with Mobutu, this is a bitter pill indeed. The focus, however, should reside on process and not personalities. The question is what type of process and what country should take the lead in brokering an agreement. The most desirable form of government in a macrocontext would be a pluralistic, representative structure with constitutional guarantees for ethnic minorities. No one should expect a Jeffersonian democracy in the near term, but rather movement toward greater political accountability and responsible governance would be a significant and welcomed improvement. Given its leading international role, its once intimate relationship with Zaire, and France's and Belgium's receding interest, the United States is best positioned to lead a multinational effort to reconcile the political factions within Zaire and direct a path forward. The UN, which had earlier appointed a special representative to deal with this situation, does not have credibility within Zaire. As the sole superpower, the United States has sufficient standing there to act as a forceful yet neutral agent for change.

The first step that the Clinton administration should take is to appoint a White House special envoy for Zaire. The special envoy must be someone in whom Mobutu would be willing to confide. As in the case of Angola, where former Ambassador Paul Hare has played a very constructive and critical role in pushing the two warring factions toward a lasting settlement, a special envoy for Zaire would form the nucleus around which political momentum will develop.

The ultimate goal of a special envoy must be unambiguous to all: the creation of an agreement between the Birindwa and Tshisekedi governments for multiparty presidential and legislative elections to be held one year from the signing of an agreement. In that transition period, Mobutu would be required to step down as president and an interim government under an impartial third party, such as Archbishop Monsengwo, would administer the country and the election process.

The United States could provide technical electoral and material support, marshal backing at the UN for the presence of international observers, and agree to build a coalition of nations that would restore normal diplomatic recognition to the government that emerges from such a process. Promises could be made to restore and coordinate foreign assistance as well as resume World Bank support, which ceased in November 1993 after Kinshasa failed to produce \$25 million in arrears.

The sacrifices for all political actors in Zaire are significant. Mobutu would be required to cede power to another individual and seek a popular mandate. Tshisekedi would be forced to abandon his opposition parliament and claims to the levers of power, not to mention submit himself to a national electoral process. And the political establishment of Zaire would be forced to convince a disillusioned populace that the nation-state of Zaire continues to exist and that the populace has a role to play in it.

From the exterior the stakes are high. There is no guarantee that through the appointment of a special envoy Mobutu and the opposition will agree to the conditioned end-game. As with any election, the question of "freeness and fairness" must be addressed along with what minimum standards would be required for extension of full diplomatic recognition by the international community.

For the Clinton administration, which is looking for a way to shift from cold war politics, the creation of a system whereby the Zairian people choose their leadership could be a lasting legacy. Inaction will lead to the dissolution of Zaire and the attempted formation of many ethnically based states, spawning further problems with Zaire's nine neighbors since ethnic groups overlap these political boundaries.

There is no easy short-term solution. It took many years for Zaire to reach its current state and it will take many more to rectify it. The option of Western engagement in Zaire is a difficult and even risky one. The alternative, to do nothing and witness the political implosion of a nation, is already playing itself out in a country once known as Somalia. ■

"In spite of a number of pressing economic problems, Eritrea faces a bright, secure future. . . . The spirit that enabled the Eritreans to win independence from a determined enemy 20 times their size should enable them to win the many battles that peace will bring."

## Eritrea Takes the World Stage

BY ROY PATEMAN

Eritrea's decisive entrance into the world community followed an internationally supervised referendum held last April 23 and 24 that asked whether Eritreans wished to form a sovereign state. More than 1 million registered to vote, out of about 3 million Eritreans (two-thirds of the population are under 18); 99.5 percent of registered voters went to the polls. Of these, 99.8 percent declared themselves in favor of sovereignty; only 1,822 people voted no. Last May 28 Eritrea became the 182d member of the United Nations, by unanimous vote, and was welcomed into the Organization of African Unity the same day.

This marked the end of a 50-year struggle for independence that began when British Commonwealth forces captured Eritrea from its Italian colonizers in April 1941. Italy had occupied Eritrea since 1889, bringing for the first time the nine different nationalities inhabiting the area under the control of a single power. Sustained resistance to Italian rule had helped forge a distinctive and unified sense of Eritrean nationality.

After a decade of British rule Eritrea was federated with neighboring Ethiopia in 1952, after a vote in the UN, even though more than 50 percent of the Eritrean electorate (male-only, at that time) had voted twice for parties advocating independence. The next 10 years saw the creeping imposition of Ethiopian direct rule. In 1962 Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie formally annexed Eritrea, and Eritrean patriots began an armed struggle. Until the revolution of 1974 the struggle was against the emperor's semifeudal regime. Following Haile Selassie's overthrow that year, the self-styled Marxist military dictatorship frequently called the Dergue (Amharic for committee) stepped up its campaign against the Eritreans.

At no time did the Eritrean army number more than 100,000, while toward the end of the struggle Ethiopia had 1 million troops under arms. By late 1977 the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) and the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) controlled most of the countryside of Eritrea and many major towns; it was only with the help of at least \$12-billion-worth of military supplies, training, and advisers from the Soviet Union and its allies that the Ethiopian regime temporarily drove the rebels back into northern Ethiopia.

Between 1978 and 1991 the EPLF fought and defeated the rival ELF in the kind of civil war that unfortunately has characterized many other sustained national struggles, and thereafter steadily increased its strength and capacity. Its guerrilla warfare matched that of the Chinese Red Army, and in the latter stages of the conflict the EPLF's skill at conventional fighting can only be compared to Israel's in 1967 and 1973 for high morale, brilliant improvisation, and execution.

The EPLF also developed into a libertarian and egalitarian political organization capable of feeding and training a large army, servicing sophisticated military hardware—most of it captured from the Ethiopians—and developing impressive social programs in land reform, education, and health.

The EPLF, often in coordination with the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front (TPLF), which had been fighting the Ethiopian military regime since 1975, inflicted more and more defeats on the increasingly demoralized Ethiopian armed forces. In May 1991 President Mengistu Haile Mariam fled Addis Ababa, the besieged Ethiopian capital, and took sanctuary with fellow Marxist Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe. The TPLF-dominated Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front, under the leadership of Meles Zenawi, took over the government of Africa's third-largest state.

The EPLF occupied the Eritrean capital, Asmara, ending the longest war ever fought on the African continent. Thus began what will be a long and often painful process of rehabilitating the war-ravaged and

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bankrupt country. In 30 years of war, more than 60,000 Eritrean fighters and 40,000 civilians were killed, and hundreds of thousands were forced into exile.

## GETTING THE ECONOMY RUNNING

Eritrea's per capita gross domestic product is only some \$70 to \$150, which makes it one of the poorest countries on the poorest continent. The EPLF government has announced that its main priorities are the rehabilitation of infrastructure, agriculture, and industry. The most basic essentials of modern life needed rapid upgrading after the war. The airports, ports, and road network had to be repaired, and telephone, air, sea, and postal communications with the outside world reopened. Domestic energy sources were totally inadequate. Urban water systems dating to Italian rule required repair, and dams to conserve the erratic and inadequate rainfall needed to be constructed in rural areas. Trees had to be planted in what is one of the most barren regions of Africa.

About four-fifths of Eritreans are small-scale peasant farmers and pastoralists. After more than 30 years of war damage and recurrent drought, Eritrea is only able to feed about 20 percent of its population. Food security is another major priority, as is an end to reliance on the uncertain and uneven charity of the outside world. Many problems have arisen over the ownership of rural as well as urban land, and debate over the most appropriate form of land tenure in the future has been heated.

During the war the 42 largest factories in Eritrea were nationalized by the Ethiopians, but by the end of the war all production had ceased. The Eritrean government took over and restarted production. It wants to privatize the factories, but so far no one has purchased these generally obsolescent and inefficient plants, even though their products include such basic goods as clothing, shoes, mineral water, beer, cola, and cooking oil. The 600 or so privately run enterprises are somewhat more efficient, but have to import about three-quarters of their raw materials and so suffer from an acute shortage of foreign exchange. Skilled labor is also in short supply.

The government is trying to encourage private domestic and foreign investment and decentralize production away from Asmara. It offers inducements including exemption from customs duties and taxes, preferential allocation of foreign exchange for imports, tax breaks, and liberal provisions for remitting foreign exchange abroad. So far foreign investors have been slow to show interest in what could become a thriving industrial economy.

The government focused initially on four sectors of the economy where growth potential seemed greatest. Eritrea has a virtually unique asset in its 1,000 kilometers of unspoiled coastline along with approxi-

mately 300 islands in the Red Sea that offer some of the best underwater diving in the world. The mountains are prime for camping and hiking, with clean air and interesting wildlife. Eritrea also has a plethora of archaeological sites, many of them as yet unexcavated.

The government is also trying to revive the fishing industry, which became practically moribund during the war. The Ministry of Marine Resources is attempting to encourage fish consumption, and Eritrea will eventually be able to export surplus production.

Eritrea possesses many minerals, including rich deposits of iron, copper (perhaps the richest grade in the world), gold, salt, potash, kaolin, and feldspar. If reports that accessible deposits of petroleum and natural gas lie off the Red Sea port of Massawa are true, many of Eritrea's problems will be solved, provided someone is prepared to invest.

Trade is the fourth targeted area. Eritrea is strategically situated on the Red Sea coast and has two excellent ports. If the civil wars in neighboring Sudan and Somalia can be brought to an end and Ethiopia and Djibouti remain stable, there are good medium- and long-term trade opportunities and some scope for regional cooperation.

## HUMAN RESOURCES

There is a pressing need in Eritrea for social as well as economic transformation. The war created more than 90,000 orphans, 56,000 disabled civilians and veterans, and 100,000 displaced people. The literacy rate is only 20 percent; there is an acute dearth of schools, teachers, and even the most fundamental educational materials. Even though the EPLF during its days "in the field" (as the liberated areas were called) developed an imaginative preventive health care service, health services are inadequate to cope with the heavy demands of a young and growing urban population, only 10 percent of which is employed.

One of the most sensitive areas concerns the demobilization of the bulk of the 100,000 men and women volunteers who fought without pay during the liberation struggle. After liberation in May 1991, many were engaged in nonmilitary activities such as reforestation and the construction of roads and schools—again without pay. The long-term goal is to integrate between 50 percent and 60 percent of the former fighters into the economy, where they can earn their own livelihood. The transition to civilian work is likely to prove as painful as in other countries. Even before independence was formally announced, several hundred fighters held a peaceful demonstration to protest the lack of consultation with them. President Isaias Afwerki (a founder of the EPLF) met with them, and funds were diverted to meet their pressing economic needs.

The preferred models for the new Eritrean armed forces appear to be Switzerland and Israel, where most men (and many women) have had military training and

can be mobilized quickly should a grave security threat materialize. The regular forces will be paid a salary.

There are 750,000 Eritrean refugees scattered throughout the world, 500,000 of them in neighboring Sudan. Some 80,000 people returned spontaneously with the end of the war, but the process of taking up life again in their country is one of the most disheartening anyone could face. Many villages were destroyed in the fighting or abandoned for a generation. Water is scarce, the land has become barren, and the refugees have no means of producing for themselves. Enormous support from the international community is needed before the refugees can be fully reintegrated into Eritrea.

### **BUILDING A POLITICAL SYSTEM**

The economic problems are daunting, but the political problems should prove less so. The EPLF leadership is a close-knit and homogenous group. It suffered very few defections during the long years of war, and few leaders lost their life in battle.

In principle there was nothing to prevent the EPLF from evolving into a centralized dictatorship like the ones in the Soviet Union and in Eastern Europe after World War II, and many other instances in Latin America, Africa, and Asia. In the event, EPLF rule in the liberated areas was fairly democratic, building on the profoundly democratic traditions of the highland villages of Eritrea. There was considerable contact between the rank and file Eritrean fighter and the leadership, all of whom endured the same hardships, ate the same food, and shared the same concerns. The party's 1987 congress resulted in increased democratization of the EPLF, together with changes to the political program that removed most of the Marxist-era rhetoric and replaced it with the language of pluralistic democracy and the market. It also marked the formal beginning of the absorption of most of the ELF membership into the EPLF.

Life for Eritreans living in liberated areas during the war was a considerable improvement over what most had experienced under a succession of colonial masters: Turks, Egyptians, Italians, British, and—by far the worst—Ethiopians. The EPLF was sincere in its commitment to religious freedom, a crucial fact considering that some half of Eritreans are Sunni Muslim and the other half are mainly members of the Eritrean Orthodox Church, along with substantial numbers of Catholics, Protestants, and animists. Women's rights were advanced by the EPLF; in particular, the movement tried to prevent the centuries-old practices of female sexual mutilation (euphemistically termed *circumcision*) and forced child marriage.

The elected committees and councils operating in the villages throughout the country may form the basis for the growth of democracy. In its first two years of operation, the Eritrean government developed a decen-

tralized system of government that gave powers to the councils of the 10 provinces (analogous to states or German *lander* in a federal system). The national government has also drafted and enacted into law civil and criminal codes; development of a fully independent judiciary is held back by a shortage of trained judges.

Last year's referendum on independence was itself a highly significant democratic experience, since it involved most Eritrean adults, including many living outside the country. There was never any real doubt about the outcome. The government had made it clear it regarded the referendum as a formal conclusion, the wishes of the people having been expressed in a relentless struggle. Any opponents of Eritrean independence were allowed two months to campaign for a no vote. The author, who was one of several hundred international observers in the country for the referendum, saw no evidence that anyone attempted to argue publicly for a vote against independence. There were many posters on display informing people that they could vote no—and implying that if they wanted a return to war and famine they were free to so choose!

The author traveled for a week in one of the remotest and most undeveloped areas of Eritrea, and in the farthest polling station observed that nothing had been omitted; all the necessary planning had been done to ensure that balloting would be secret and fair. It became apparent that the government had thoroughly educated the population as to what was expected of it. Virtually all registered voters went to the polls, and fewer than 328 ballots were declared invalid. There was no doubt in any observer's mind that the result was a fair reflection of people's opinions.

One of the first actions the Eritrean government took after the referendum was to begin drafting a constitution. Following Eritrean (and EPLF) practice, a respected elder with impeccable legal credentials was chosen to chair a constitution committee, and what promises to be a long, exhaustive process of study, debate, and argument commenced. Bearing in mind the length of time it took to devise and ratify a workable constitution for the United States, it will not be surprising if the Eritreans also take their time, attempting to do a thorough job. To enable free and full discussion of the issues, the government is drafting a press law that will guarantee an independent press.

Whether Eritrea will have a parliamentary or a presidential system is not yet known. At the moment President Isaias Afwerki is head of the government and commander in chief of the army. Isaias, who was elected by the National Assembly after the 1993 referendum, chairs the country's executive branch, the State Council, whose members are nominated by the president. The National Assembly, the legislative body, ratifies the nominations; so far it has not rejected any nominees.

One of the major issues the government will face is the role of political parties. Isaias has said many times that parties should not be based on religion, race, regionalism, or ethnicity. Allowing parties based on Islam or Christianity would be a major cause of friction, and open up the wounds inflicted by the civil war between the ELF and EPLF. There is no question, however, that the system to be established will be multiparty; Eritreans have learned from the disasters caused by one-party governments in Africa and elsewhere.

The third congress of the EPLF was held in mid-February. EPLF fighters elected delegates, and a draft charter and constitution were published in the government newspaper, *Hadas Eritrea* (Eritrean News). There has in the past been some talk of the EPLF dissolving itself, having fulfilled its objective of leading the Eritrean people to independence from Ethiopia, but it seems evident from the congress that the movement is not about to do this. And even if it does, its tens of thousands of former members will continue to be the major actors in Eritrean politics for many years to come.

In the charter ratified by the congress, the EPLF stresses national unity and presents itself as the most appropriate vehicle for the country's economic, social, and political development. Important steps have already been taken to expand the base of the movement. Last May some 60 additional men and women (including some former ELF fighters) joined the central committee to form the National Assembly. Efforts are being made to improve the internal democracy of the movement—for example, allowing more meaningful debate on tactics and organization. And it seems that the membership of the central committee will be changed quite substantially, and made more accountable to the general membership. Eritrea is a small country, and it has become apparent that some central committee members, although they were good fighters, are less than adequate in responsible civilian posts (at the February congress the central committee was halved in size).

Most important, the movement (or party) will have to be divorced from the government and its executive activities. The EPLF will have to forge relationships with Eritrean civil society, that mass of nongovernment associations including independent trade unions,

church groups, women's organizations, and human rights watchdog groups. Considering everything, the transition from what is in effect a one-party state to a multiparty state may take another four years. During this time all EPLF members will work without salary; an ascetic warrior caste is transforming itself into a dedicated professional group of mandarin bureaucrats.

## THE NEW COUNTRY IN THE REGION

Although Eritrea has one of the smallest populations in the Horn of Africa, it possesses the best-trained, -supplied, and -motivated armed forces in the region. This alone will do much to guarantee the nation's security. Relations with Ethiopia are excellent; Presidents Isaias and Zenawi have excellent personal and working relations. Moreover, through a Joint High Ministerial Commission, the two independent states have signed a number of agreements that do much to address Ethiopian concerns. Cooperation in trade, and in particular transport and communications, is growing. The Eritrean ports of Mombasa and Aseb are free ports for Ethiopia. At present there is a common currency, and unrestricted movement of citizens across the international border is allowed.

Relations between the EPLF and a succession of regimes in Sudan had always been relatively friendly; during the years of struggle, the EPLF maintained rear bases (not military) on Sudanese soil, which aided it immeasurably. But relations have frayed this year, following clashes at the border between Eritrean troops and the Jihad, a group created by the ruling Sudanese National Islamic Front and made up of a few Muslim Eritreans, Sudanese, and other nationalities. Such attempted incursions present no real threat to the stability of the new state. Ties with all other Middle Eastern countries, including Israel, are cordial.

In spite of a number of pressing economic problems, Eritrea faces a bright, secure future. The leadership is competent and dedicated. It has the support of the population, and the goodwill of most of its neighbors and the international community. It has practical and imaginative plans to revitalize the economy and the political process. The spirit that enabled the Eritreans to win independence from a determined enemy 20 times their size should enable them to win the many battles that peace will bring. ■



In Somaliland, which has seceded from Somalia although the rest of the world does not recognize it as an independent state, clan elders have used traditional practices to bring peace. The same methods might not work as well with the warring factions in Somalia, but they—unlike what Rakiya Omaar sees as misguided efforts from outside—are an African solution to an African problem.

## Somaliland: One Thorn Bush at a Time

BY RAKIYA OMAAR

Clan divisions are the fault lines along which Somali society fractured during more than a decade of political manipulation and bloody conflict. But in Somaliland, the northwest region that declared its secession from Somalia in May 1991, clan elders have used the clan system and its traditional practices to end armed conflict, establish a framework for resolving future disputes, bring about a peaceful change in government, and provide a foundation for rebuilding civil society. The most enduring and accountable elements in Somali society, clan elders, have displayed tact, persistence, and patience—in sharp contrast to the heavy-handed international actions in southern Somalia. The contrast between these two approaches raises profound questions about the nature of power, authority, legitimacy, representation, good governance, conflict resolution, and outside intervention in war-torn countries.

Many of the recent conflicts in Somalia/Somaliland have been between neighboring clans, making the violence an intimate affair that traumatized communities. Traditional codes of conduct were broken: family relations were severed, marriages dissolved, and friendships ravaged. Grief, anger, shame, guilt, and fear of reprisals poisoned relations.

Somali communities must find new ways to live together. Somaliland has chosen a unique path—a grassroots process that has made peacemaking a collective responsibility. Unlike the United States/United Nations approach in Somalia—the politics of involve-

ment without responsibility—elders, religious leaders, poets, businessmen, former military officers, politicians, intellectuals, women's groups, private voluntary organizations, and most important, ordinary citizens of Somaliland, have been mobilized to negotiate, finance, and implement an agenda for peace. There have been frustrations and setbacks, but the result, and the process itself, have been a remarkable display of civic maturity.

### FROM DIVISION TO ARTIFICIAL UNITY

In the late nineteenth century the colonial powers divided the Somali peninsula into five zones: the British established the Protectorate of Somaliland in the north and occupied the Northern Frontier District of Kenya (now Kenya's Northern province); the French took Djibouti; the Ethiopians the Ogaden region; and the Italians the remainder along the southern coast. Until the late 1970s Somali nationalists united around the aim of combining these territories into a single state.<sup>1</sup>

Somaliland gained its independence from Britain on June 26, 1960. Six days later it united with newly independent Italian Somalia to form the Somali Republic. For Somaliland this irredentist dream was also expected to deliver important economic dividends, including—most important of all—the recapture of vital grazing lands ceded to the Ethiopian government by Britain in 1897.

But the euphoria of unification could not mask growing friction over the attempts to amalgamate, with no preparations or planning, two regions with different economies, different judicial, administrative, and educational systems, and different languages for conducting business (English and Italian).<sup>2</sup> Government was centralized in Mogadishu, and economic and political opportunities became concentrated there. After unification the north lost most of its seasoned politicians, educated cadre, and leading entrepreneurs to the

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<sup>1</sup>At the Charter Conference of the Organization of African Unity in 1963, Somalia was the only African state to contest the clause that held colonial borders to be inviolable.

<sup>2</sup>The script for the Somali language was not introduced until 1972.

southern capital. Increasingly, northerners blamed the south for their economic and political marginalization. They complained that foreign assistance was spent mostly on development in the south, while government policies crippled the north's economy.

Regional demands for a more equitable share in national resources and a higher political profile were important in creating and sustaining a sense of injustice in Somaliland. But the actual decision to leave the union had its roots in more than a decade of extraordinary violence against the largest clan in the northwest, the Isaaks.

In July 1977 the military regime of Mohammed Siad Barre, which had come to power in a 1969 coup, invaded Ethiopia to regain the Ogaden, an eastern desert region settled by Somali-speaking people. The Somalis were repulsed in March 1978—a defeat that had far-reaching political, economic, social, and psychological consequences in Somalia. Unsure of the loyalty of either the army or the people, Siad Barre retreated into the security of his own family, his Marehan clan, and the related Darod clans of the Dulbahante and Ogaden.

After the war hundreds of thousands of ethnic Somalis fled Ethiopia. The government organized armed militias among the refugees, ostensibly to return to liberate the Ogaden. In fact, the militias terrorized local Isaak civilians. Isaak delegations visited Mogadishu, urging the government to end the atrocities. When they failed, Isaak officers deserted the armed forces and organized a unit to fight the militias, which led to further cycles of violence. Resentment intensified as preferential treatment for the refugees in services, jobs, and the allocation of land reduced Isaaks to the status of second-class citizens in their own region. In April 1981 a group of Isaaks in London announced the creation of the Somali National Movement (SNM), dedicated to the overthrow of Siad Barre's regime. Soon afterward, Isaak officers defected to Ethiopia. It was the beginning of a long and bloody decade.

The government's war against the Isaaks was directed at a specific military enemy, the SNM, and its "supporters," an adversary whose definition grew broader by the day. Isaak civilians bore the brunt of government tactics designed to make the countryside inhospitable to SNM forces. The government tried to isolate the movement by depopulating villages, disrupting its food supply, and creating other logistical problems. Livestock was slaughtered, crops destroyed, villages razed, and land mines strewn throughout the region. Civilians were detained and tortured, or fled the country to escape a life of arbitrary abuses. Summary executions became common. Schools turned into war zones as soldiers and Isaak students fought a bloody war of attrition.

Psychological warfare was central to the strategy to root out opposition. Relatives, friends, colleagues, and

neighbors were pressured to spy on each other, wives were encouraged to divorce husbands who had joined the SNM, and families were punished for mourning those who died in action. "Uncooperative" Isaaks were denied jobs and credit, or had their businesses closed.

The SNM operated from bases in Ethiopia with Ethiopian support. This abruptly changed on April 3, 1988. Facing military disaster in the wars in Ethiopia's Eritrea and Tigre regions, Ethiopian President Mengistu Haile Mariam signed an agreement with Siad Barre to close down the movement's military operations in Ethiopia in exchange for Siad Barre's withdrawal of support for the forces confronting Mengistu. Cornered, the SNM responded in May by launching surprise attacks against the town of Burao in Somaliland and the provincial capital, Hargeisa. Unable to crush the small force of 5,000, the government turned its frustration against Isaak civilians.

For days government forces pounded the residential districts of Burao and Hargeisa with artillery, antitank fire, and aerial bombardment, triggering the flight of almost the entire Isaak civilian population. The atrocities knew no bounds or borders. Troops murdered, raped, and robbed people as they tried to escape, and planes strafed them even after they had crossed into Ethiopia. Tens of thousands died from disease in the Ethiopian desert. Seventy percent of Hargeisa was leveled. From June 1988 to January 1991, Isaak towns and homes were systematically plundered by soldiers and pro-government civilians. Ironically, the looting helped pave the way for peace and reconciliation, since little of material value was left to fight over.

Its offensive defeated, Mengistu allowed the SNM to withdraw to Ethiopia, its ranks swollen with Isaak men and boys from the refugee camps. International publicity about Siad Barre's savage campaign in the north deprived the regime of its oxygen—foreign aid. Opposition elsewhere in Somalia intensified as new movements took up arms. In September 1990 the three principal movements—the SNM, the southern-based Somali Patriotic Movement, and the United Somali Congress in central Somalia—agreed to coordinate their military and political tactics. Their efforts succeeded; Siad Barre fled Mogadishu on January 26, 1991.

## **DIVISION AGAIN: SOMALILAND IS BORN**

The three movements had pledged to hold a national conference after Siad Barre's departure on the future political map of Somalia. But these maneuvers did not impress the SNM rank and file—the refugees—who were intent on severing ties with Mogadishu. They had crossed the Rubicon of secession in May 1988. The scale and ferocity of the war in the north had nurtured a visceral hatred not only of the regime but of

everything it represented, including the union. The unilateral decision by Mohammed Ali Mahdi of the United Somali Congress to form a government, without consulting the SNM, was the last straw. The SNM leadership, anxious not to antagonize the other anti-Barre forces and the international community, waffled until popular opinion forced a showdown at an SNM conference in Burao in May 1991. Secession was formally declared on May 18.

For some nine months Somaliland enjoyed a heady optimism and relative tranquillity. The economy took off and residents began the task of reconstructing what had become a wasteland. But the confidence was short-lived. The first SNM government, a haphazard creation without coherent administrative structures, had no clear policies on national priorities such as disarmament and demobilization, security, the economy, or reconstruction. Accusations of political bias in the distribution of ministerial portfolios paralyzed the government and resulted in disputes between clans. Both the government and its civilian and military opponents squandered their time and energy in settling personal political disputes.

The hostilities between and among politicians and former army officers who had defected to the SNM escalated into a tense political standoff. In January 1992 the rivalry erupted into open warfare in Burao between the militias of the Habr Jelo and the Habr Yunis, two Isaak clans. When their diplomacy failed to stop the shooting, clan elders went onto the battlefield. The fighting lasted only four days and civilians did not participate, but it sent shock waves throughout Somaliland. Civilians fled Burao, displaced in a "brothers' war" less than a year after coming home.

The conflict spread to Sheikh, located between Burao and Berbera. Berbera itself became engulfed in the war on March 1, sparked by armed confrontations between the militias of the Isse Muse and those of the Habr Yunis clans. Somaliland's principal port, Berbera is vital to the export of livestock, and thus to the economy. At the time the port was the main source of revenues for the government, which made the battle for control that much fiercer.

It is difficult to exaggerate the fallout from the conflict in Berbera. Economic activity throughout Somaliland came to a stop, people displaced from their homes flooded neighboring towns, and communal relations soured as violent incidents increased and the hope of winning the loyalty of non-Isaak clans within Somaliland evaporated. The few UN and foreign agencies operating in Somaliland either evacuated their foreign staff or closed down. Prospects for international recognition were thought to have received a fatal blow.

## ENTER THE ELDERS

The war in Berbera was a moment of truth for Somaliland. The perception that the government had

not only abdicated its responsibility to prevent violence but was actively fueling the fighting created a dangerous political vacuum. In the absence of any other civic institutions with national standing, the forces of peace coalesced around clan elders, who represented continuity and symbolized the values of compromise.

Resolving conflicts was nothing new for the elders, who are experienced professional negotiators. The position of elder (always held by men) is not hereditary, unlike that of chief in many other African countries, though over time some families may establish an influential place in their community. The elders' power comes from the authority their clan has delegated them to manage the clan's affairs. They are chosen by virtue of personal attributes such as age, expertise in the political arts of compromise and persuasion, powers of oratory, skill as a poet, religious knowledge, piety, wealth, generosity, courage, and a reputation for fairness.

Nothing is secret with the elders. Their discussions are held in open forums that all adult males of the clan or their representatives can attend. They settle disputes within the clan, and are responsible for relations with other groups, including declaring war and making peace.

Worried about the independent political base of the elders, the Siad Barre regime had worked hard to destroy their effectiveness. Once Isaaks became the target of government repression, some of the elders were bought off or silenced through intimidation and humiliation, but many others stood their ground, providing leadership and solace. It was the war against Siad Barre, however, that reinforced the bonds. An Isaak Council of Elders was formed after the mass exodus of June 1988, and it is widely recognized that its work made it possible for the SNM to survive. The elders sent young men from the clan to serve as fighters, and also provided money, food, political advice, and logistical and moral support.

The fighting in Berbera encouraged the elders to embark on a process that would not only stop the bloodshed but construct a broader settlement to ensure security by promoting peace and reconciliation throughout Somaliland. A series of bilateral peace conferences at the local level led to multilateral conferences at the regional level, culminating in a national conference in Borama from late January through May 1993 that adopted a countrywide security framework, laid down a national constitutional structure, and led to a peaceful change of government. (The new president is Mohammed Haji Ibrahim Egal, a veteran politician who served as prime minister of Somalia in the 1960s.)

The experience of Somaliland shows the importance of treating peace-building, peace-making, and peace-enforcing as an integral process. Above all, it proves that peace-building calls for a degree of sensitivity,



patience, perseverance, and endurance that only a people whose own survival is at stake can muster.

The conferences always lasted longer than scheduled, as unexpected questions arose that required weeks of negotiation: "What is the hurry?" asked one elder. "The killings lasted for years. We cannot bring the dead back. But we can bring peace. If we hurry and fail, it is not only a betrayal of the future; it shows disrespect to the collective suffering of the past."

Facilitators trusted to remain neutral provided each side with a list of those from the opposing group planning to attend. The lists were vetted to weed out elders regarded as "men of war." To create calm and goodwill, the opening sessions were dominated by speeches, the reading of poetry, religious ceremonies, and generous hospitality by the hosts. "You have to lower the temperature," explained another elder. "People cannot make peace if there is fire in their eyes and hate in their hearts."

The elders followed their traditional approach to mediation, guided by the Somali proverb: "If you want to dismantle a hedge, remove one thorn bush at a time." Opponents are encouraged to meet face to face to overcome the bitterness and suspicions that divide them. Contentious issues are avoided until the participants have established a level of understanding that encourages debate rather than arguments. Common interests—commercial considerations, existing intermarriages—are highlighted to create incentives for compromise. In this case, developing the trust essential for negotiation helped sustain the peace process by making subsequent breach of agreements dishonorable.

Pragmatism has been the hallmark of the negotiations, which are ongoing. The objective is to arrive at agreements that the parties to be reconciled have already drawn up and adopted—the larger meetings merely reaffirming what the parties themselves know to be an acceptable compromise. The parties are directly responsible for putting the accords into effect. Other groups do not intervene unless asked to do so.

Exceptions are made in the case of serious disputes with national implications, such as the October 1992 Sheikh conference that ended the Berbera conflict. Elders from throughout Somaliland attended, and arbitration committees were established to resolve questions that the two sides, the Isse Muse and Habr Unis clans of Berbera, could not agree on. All the elders signed the bilateral agreement, to highlight its significance. In addition, they agreed to supervise implementation, and took on the responsibility of punishing violators.

By contrast, the UN-brokered pacts in Somalia have collapsed because there were no mechanisms for enforcing them locally. Nor has there been an effort to develop political structures that would maintain pressure on the signatories to keep their word. In Somali-

land the cornerstones of the agreements are the local joint security committees created in areas of mixed clan population to monitor and implement the accords and devise penalties for violations. These committees, which consist mainly of local elders, act as a rapid deployment force, responding promptly to developments that threaten the peace—the theft of livestock, the incursion of militias into another group's territory, and murder.

The government has only recently begun to disarm and demobilize clan militias and gunmen. Somaliland has no army, and the police force is totally inadequate. Armed bandits remain the greatest threat to personal security and the general peace. Many clans have agreed not to seek compensation for the death of a bandit. In some accords the parties have agreed to make the bandit's family responsible for damages in cases of murder and theft. Instances of habitual bandits killed or handed over to police by their own families—an unprecedented development in Somali society—are not uncommon now.

## A SOMALI SOLUTION TO A SOMALI PROBLEM

Peace-building demands intimate knowledge of a community, and its history, economics, and social relations. Most important, it requires an understanding of the politics of its geography. In Somalia the UN consistently failed to grasp the most fundamental fact of all—that material reasons prompted and fueled the violence.

Local conferences dealt almost exclusively with material issues. Disputes over assets—land, grazing rights, the use of wells, the return of houses and stolen vehicles, and the exchange of stray livestock—dominated discussions, either because those problems were the source of historical tensions or because the years of conflict had created new grievances. This helps explain the basis of the elders' authority: they are intimately involved in the mundane affairs of their clans.

Placing material questions at the heart of the peace agenda at the local level, and implementing the agreements on them before moving on to regional disputes, have been the key to the elders' success. Improvements in the security situation have resulted in tangible material gains, such as the return of property and the reopening of trade routes for livestock. These economic benefits have in turn improved security; when clans that had been suspicious of each other graze their animals together, trade, social relations, and the exchange of intelligence are furthered, which makes stability more likely and conflict less likely.

Driven by its agenda, the quest for a quick fix, and a timetable shaped by the international feel-good factor, UN agreements in Somalia faltered where it mattered—on the ground. Problems were to be "solved"

before UN officials understood the nature of the problem. Less than a month after United States marines arrived in Mogadishu, Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali in early January 1993 opened the first political conference for Somalia in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, before his organization had any political officers in the region. The schedule of the subsequent meeting was announced at the January talks. To assume, in such a delicate situation, that artificial deadlines concentrate minds is to invite failure. Many Somalis in Mogadishu cautioned against a speedy process, emphasizing that conflicts had to be resolved at the local and regional level before national discussions could begin. In Somaliland, the conference between the Isaak and Darod clans of the Erigayvo region was preceded by at least seven separate conferences between the groups over the period of a year.

To hail the elders as the saviors of Somaliland is to miss the larger point of their achievement. They succeeded because ordinary people gave them the authority to make peace and promote reconciliation. In turn, they made their task a collective endeavor. Somali elders put into practice what thoughtful development specialists describe as the prerequisites for sustainable development: community support, participation in and ownership of the process, common goals, legitimate representation, and a long-term process.

The fact that the negotiations took place in Somaliland itself is of crucial significance. Because of their national importance, there was widespread interest in the Borama and Sheikh conferences. A Somali relief worker who followed both highlighted the benefits of the two-way traffic between elders and the population: "Every elder will meet at least 20 people a day—in his home, on the road, at the mosque, at the tea shop. He tells us what was said and decided; this makes its way into the grapevine. Everyone gives him his or her opinion. He takes our views back to the conference table. The feedback helps to shape the content of the debate and becomes a part of the decision-making process itself. . . . Everyone feels involved. This could not happen if they were cooped up in some conference center in Nairobi or Addis Ababa."

Carrying the process forward "at home" had other advantages. Guests and hosts were both expected to honor certain codes of conduct, and this in itself was a restraint, because of the fear that bad manners would be held against individuals and groups. When unanticipated problems cropped up, the facilitators tapped reservoirs invisible to foreign eyes. To a group refusing to participate in proposed discussions, the hosts would send elders related through their mothers to the group. "At home" also meant that the conferences were largely financed by the communities of Somaliland and the Somaliland diaspora. While foreign

contributions helped the Boroma conference, they were for the most part limited.

Many factors made the negotiations possible, and some are unique to Somaliland. The non-Isaak clans in the northwest—the Dulbahante, Gadabursi, Warsengeli, and Isse—had been allies of the Siad Barre regime. But long before the ouster, influential members of these groups began talks with the SNM in order to prevent retaliation against non-Isaaks. This helped preempt an escalation of the conflict once the movement had routed Siad Barre's army in the north. In retaking Somaliland, SNM fighters smashed the Gadabursi town of Dila in February 1991, shaking both non-Isaak and Isaak leaders. The SNM called a halt to such revenge attacks. Representatives from the non-Isaak clans held discussions with the movement in Berbera. In the end, they decided not to repeat history but to close the book on atrocities that took place before the February 1991 cease-fire.

Another important factor in the success of the peace talks is that the SNM, representing the Isaak, the largest and most powerful clan in the area, had won the old-fashioned way—on the battlefield. A balance of terror would undoubtedly have prolonged the war in Somaliland, at least for some time. The Isaaks' decision to pursue reconciliation, despite the anger they felt, was enlightened self-interest; any other choice guaranteed a future shadowed by mistrust, fear, and killings. But some of the enduring flash points in Somalia—for example, the port of Kismayu—can perhaps only be settled by outright military victory by one side or the other.

None of this, however, can mask the fact that Somaliland has been completely destroyed by a decade of war. Its infrastructure has collapsed. The government has no money. It cannot pay salaries, forcing experienced doctors, teachers, and managers to seek jobs with foreign agencies. Thousands of heavily armed young men—the greatest threat to security, peace and reconciliation—are unable to find alternative employment. Neither the government nor the public can comprehend the refusal of the UN and donor countries to assist Somaliland. The folly of spending millions to wage a military conflict in Mogadishu while withholding the thousands that could sustain peace in Somaliland has given their criticism a sharper edge.

Boutros-Ghali has made it clear that recognition of Somaliland is not on the UN's agenda. The war that engulfed Somalia, and the absence of a central government, have delayed the day of reckoning. No one knows what the future holds. What is certain is that any UN efforts to enforce unity will spark a new war and a new tragedy for the people of Somaliland and Somalia. ■

## Book Reviews

### ON AFRICA

#### Adjustment in Africa:

##### Reforms, Results, and the Road Ahead

By Christine W. Jones and Miguel A. Kiguel. Published for the World Bank by New York: Oxford University Press, 1994. 284 pp., \$19.95.

#### Hemmed In:

##### Responses to Africa's Economic Decline

Edited by Thomas M. Callaghy and John Ravenhill. New York: Columbia University Press, 1993. 573 pp., \$50.00, cloth; \$18.50, paper.

According to the World Bank, structural adjustment has provided a good foundation for the creation of "sustainable, poverty-reducing growth" in Africa. In a new World Bank report examining this thesis, the 6 African countries (out of 29 surveyed) that had instituted policy changes since undertaking structural adjustment registered significant economic progress. However, the authors note that even these six countries do not measure up to the newly industrializing economies in Asia, and none showed more than a little improvement in public enterprise and financial reform. (Two of sub-Saharan Africa's stronger economies, South Africa and Botswana—which did not implement structural adjustment programs—were excluded from the survey. It would have been interesting to see their development compared with those countries undergoing adjustment.)

The report admits that "unrealistically high hopes" have been a burden to adjustment programs, but complains that "[o]pponents have wrongly cast and criticized adjustment as an alternative to measures supporting long-term development." The authors argue that this confusion has led to increased and unwarranted pessimism: "The turn-around in growth shows that adjustment—even incomplete adjustment—can put African countries back on the road to development."

In contrast, *Hemmed In* claims a more "realistic" perspective on African development than both the Afro-pessimists and those who assert that structural adjustment has put the continent on a new course toward prosperity. Certain ideological and practical

problems are targeted and examined: the belief that structural adjustment is a quick fix for Africa's struggling economies; the fact that trade liberalization has begun a process of de-industrialization rather than an improvement in industrial efficiency; the realization that the relative inflexibility of both political and economic actors has proven to be a greater force against change than previously thought; and the failure of democratic reforms to guarantee the effective implementation of economic reforms. According to the authors, the IMF, World Bank, and international financial institutions—all three of which created the current "back to the future" economic policy for Africa—have been too simplistic and Western-centric in their analysis of a complex African reality; but if they learn from the mistakes of the first decade of attempted structural adjustment in Africa, there is hope that structural adjustment will eventually succeed.

Melissa J. Sherman

#### Breaking Story: The South African Press

By Gordon S. Jackson. Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1993. 308 pp., \$34.95.

Though stunted by years of government suppression, economic crises, and public apathy, a free press is emerging as South Africa dismantles its apartheid government. Gordon Jackson, a South African journalist who worked in Johannesburg for three years following the Soweto riots in 1976, examines the recent history of the print media in the country. In the process, he addresses many of the problems that face any modern press, namely, the friction between objective and advocacy journalism, the search for credibility, and the danger of government regulation. As the country moves toward its first multiracial elections, these issues are particularly relevant to the future of democracy and free expression. With the rise of alternative papers, the predominantly white press that was once submissive to the government may soon become a buttress of the new democracy. *Breaking Story* examines this possibility in careful detail while remaining critical of the media's past weakness.

Leanne P. Mos



# THE MONTH IN REVIEW

March 1994

## INTERNATIONAL

### Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)

March 18—In Honolulu, US Treasury Secretary Lloyd Bentsen convenes the 1st meeting attended by the finance ministers from all 17 of the group's member countries.

### International Monetary Fund (IMF)

March 22—The fund approves a \$1.5-billion loan to Russia in exchange for the government's agreement to impose new taxes and tighter budgetary controls.

### Middle East Peace Talks

March 30—In Cairo, the Palestine Liberation Organization says it will resume peace talks with Israel after the two sides agree to allow international peacekeepers to operate in Hebron; talks had been halted following the February 25 massacre of at least 29 Palestinians by an Israeli settler in a Hebron mosque.

March 31—Israel agrees to a PLO request for an international peacekeeping force in the West Bank city of Hebron; the force will be made up of 160 lightly armed observers from Italy, Norway, and Denmark; both sides also agree to resume peace talks on Palestinian self-rule in the Gaza Strip and Jericho.

### Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)

March 25—All OECD members except the US agree to ban the export of hazardous wastes to third world countries. Exports of toxic wastes will be banned immediately; the export of waste for recycling will be banned beginning January 1, 1998.

### United Nations (UN)

March 18—The Security Council votes unanimously to condemn the massacre in the West Bank town of Hebron last month; the United States abstains from voting on paragraphs concerning protection for the Palestinians and implying that Jerusalem is part of the occupied territories.

March 31—The Security Council votes unanimously to send 3,500 new peacekeeping troops to Sarajevo, central Bosnia, and Croatia; the original resolution called for 10,000 troops, but yesterday the US said it could not afford its portion of the costs of sending a force that large.

## ALGERIA

March 10—Muslim gunmen free 900 prisoners, including 280 who had been sentenced to death, from a maximum-security prison in eastern Algeria.

March 16—The state press service reports Algerian forces have killed 57 suspected Muslim militants in the past week, 39 of them in Algiers.

March 30—Two bareheaded women are killed at a bus stop in Algiers; Muslim militants are believed to be responsible. Last month Muslim fundamentalists announced that women who did not veil themselves in public would be targets for assassination.

## ANGOLA

March 3—Relief flights to the besieged northern city of Malange are suspended after the March 1 shelling of a World Food Program plane at the Malange airport.

## AZERBAIJAN

March 19—At least 12 people are killed and 53 others wounded, many of them critically, in a bomb explosion at a subway station in Baku; no group takes responsibility.

## BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

March 1—After meeting with Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev, Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic agrees to open the Tuzla airfield to UN relief flights. The UN had set a March 7 deadline for the Serbs to open the airport; more than 200,000 Bosnian Muslim refugees have sought refuge in Tuzla, a UN-declared "safe area."

March 17—Bosnian Serbs and the Bosnian government sign a cease-fire agreement to allow Sarajevans and relief supplies limited movement across Serb siege lines around Sarajevo.

March 18—The Bosnian Croats and Bosnian Muslims sign a federation agreement in Washington; they will join their territories, but final boundaries will not be drawn until a territorial agreement is reached with the Bosnian Serbs. Under the agreement, 15 small regions, some Croat-dominated and some Muslim-dominated, will be formed. Muslims and Croats will share the responsibility for national defense, commerce, and foreign affairs.

March 19—Bosnian Croats and Muslims begin to exchange 1,300 Muslim and Croat prisoners of war as part of the agreement signed March 17.

March 21—UN peacekeepers report they have found heavy weaponry, including tanks, howitzers, and mortars, on the edge of the 12.4-mile radius of the exclusion zone the UN imposed last month around Sarajevo.

March 23—Bosnian Serbs hijack and loot 10 UN trucks carrying 94 tons of food and medical supplies to the Muslim enclave of Maglaj; 9 of the trucks are still missing.

March 30—Speaking in Sarajevo, US Ambassador to the UN Madeleine K. Albright announces that the US will give Sarajevo \$10 million for reconstruction but will not send troops to Bosnia until a full peace agreement has been negotiated.

## BURUNDI

March 12—Relief agencies and diplomats report heavy casualties after violence that erupted last week between the rival Hutu and Tutsi groups, *The New York Times* reports.

March 23—President Cyprien Ntaryamira addresses the nation on public radio, asking the Tutsi-dominated army to stop fighting with Hutus in Bujumbura, the capital, and its surrounding suburbs.

March 26—Relief officials and diplomats report that after 6 days of heavy fighting, the struggle between the Tutsi army and Hutu majority in Bujumbura is over.

## CAMBODIA

March 26—The town of Pailin, a major Khmer Rouge stronghold in the northwest, fell to government forces a week ago, *The New York Times* reports.

## CHINA

March 4—A Beijing court convicts Shen Taifu, the former chief of the Great Wall Machinery and Electronics Group, on bribery and corruption charges and sentences him to death for his role in a \$115-million corporate bond scandal exposed last year; Li Xiaoshi, a former vice minister at the State Science and Technology Commission, receives a 20-year prison sentence for accepting bribes from Shen.

March 10—The 2d plenary session of the eighth National People's Congress convenes in Beijing; President Jiang Zemin tells legislators that "stability" is "indispensable."

Seven prominent intellectuals, led by historian Xu Liangying, issue a petition addressed to President Jiang and Qiao Shi, chairman of the National People's Congress, appealing for freedom of speech and thought and the release of those jailed for expressing their ideas. "To talk about modernization without mentioning human rights," reads the text, "is like climbing a tree to catch a fish." Several dozen dissidents have been detained recently.

## CROATIA

March 4—President Franjo Tudjman says he endorses the cease-fire accord signed earlier this week by the Bosnian Muslims and Croats.

March 8—A NATO troop plane flying to France over Croatia is hit by anti-aircraft fire and forced to land; 4 passengers are injured; the Croatian government blames Serbs occupying the Krajina region for the attack.

## EGYPT

March 11—Gunmen kill 2 priests and 3 worshippers outside the Moharrak monastery in Qussiya, 180 miles south of Cairo; police say the attackers were Muslim militants.

March 21—Government soldiers attack Islamic militants in Balayza, 215 miles south of Cairo; 6 militants and 1 soldier are killed.

## EL SALVADOR

March 17—Election authorities bar residents of 3 towns in the Chalatenango area, where support for antigovernment guerrillas had been strong, from voting in their towns for the national elections March 20; voters will have to travel to the provincial capital of Chalatenango in order to vote.

March 30—On March 20, El Salvador held its 1st election after 12 years of civil war between the government and the leftist Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front that ended in January 1992; preliminary results released today show that Armando Calderón Sol, the candidate of the ruling Nationalist Republican Alliance (ARENA), received 49 percent of votes cast, defeating leftist candidate Ruben Zamora, who received 25 percent; election authorities announce that a runoff election will be held April 24.

## FRANCE

March 28—The government announces it is abandoning a recent decree that permitted employers to pay workers under age 25 between 30% and 80% of the \$1,000 monthly minimum wage. Student protests have been occurring for 3 weeks in several cities; on March 25 in Paris and Lyons, 200,000 youths demonstrated against the decree. The measure was designed to increase employment in France.

## GEORGIA

March 26—The Defense Ministry reports that Abkhazian separatists have taken over the village of Lata just outside

Abkhazia's borders—the 1st territory they have captured outside the breakaway province.

## GERMANY

March 25—Police say local neo-Nazis today firebombed a synagogue in Lübeck in the 1st such attack since World War II.

## ISRAEL

March 1—Israel releases 596 Palestinian prisoners; the government has promised to release as many as 1,000 of the 9,000 Palestinian prisoners in custody in response to the February 25 massacre by a Jewish settler of at least 29 Palestinians in the Israeli-occupied West Bank city of Hebron.

Israeli troops fatally wound a Jewish settler near the West Bank city of Bidya; the army calls the killing a "tragic error."

March 3—Israel frees 400 more Palestinian prisoners.

It is reported that at least 22 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli forces during Palestinian protests in the aftermath of the February 25 massacre.

March 13—Israel's government outlaws the radical anti-Arab Jewish groups Kach and Kahane Chai, declaring them terrorist organizations.

March 23—Israeli troops kill 3 Palestinians during a gun battle with suspected Hamas militants in Hebron.

March 24—The government announces it will allow lightly armed international peacekeepers to be stationed in Hebron.

March 28—Undercover Israeli soldiers kill 6 Palestinians suspected to be members of the Fatah Hawks, an armed wing of PLO chairman Yasir Arafat's mainstream Fatah faction.

## ITALY

March 30—Final results from national parliamentary elections held March 27–28 show that a right-wing coalition has displaced the centrist Christian Democratic party that had governed Italy since 1948. Rightists won 58.1% of the vote, and an absolute majority of 366 seats in the 630-seat lower house; left-wing parties, including the Democratic Party of the Left and the Communist Refounding, won 33.8%.

## MEXICO

March 23—In San Cristóbal de las Casas, the government and the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) reach a tentative peace settlement. The government's promises include greater human rights and protection for Indians, land reforms, electoral reforms, and improved schooling. The document must be ratified by the peasant communities involved.

March 23—Institutional Revolutionary party (PRI) presidential candidate Luis Donaldo Colosio Murrieta is assassinated during a campaign stop in Tijuana; the gunman, Mario Aburto Martínez, is caught; he tells police that he has "saved Mexico."

March 29—The PRI selects Ernesto Zedillo Ponce de León, an American-educated economist and a former budget and finance minister and education minister, as its new candidate for president.

## RUSSIA

March 15—In Moscow, representatives of Russia and Latvia initial an agreement setting an August 31 deadline for the withdrawal of the remaining 13,000 Russian troops in Latvia; the pact also gives Russia a 4-year lease on the Soviet early warning radar station at Skrunda. The last Russian soldier left Lithuania in August; an agreement with Estonia is under negotiation.

## SLOVAKIA

March 10—Parliament, voting 78 to 2, with 56 abstentions, passes a motion of no confidence against the government of Prime Minister Vladimir Meciar, leader of the Movement for a Democratic Slovakia, which led Slovakia out of Czechoslovakia in January 1993; differences between Meciar and President Michal Kovac and charges that the government's privatization of state-owned enterprises benefited Meciar's party and associates preceded the vote.

March 14—Jozef Moravcik, Czechoslovakia's last foreign minister, is sworn in as prime minister, along with his cabinet; he heads a 5-party coalition including the rightist Christian Democrats, former Communists regrouped under the Party of the Left, and 3 smaller centrist parties; Moravcik says he will call for fall elections.

## SOMALIA

March 16—Clan leader Mohammed Farah Aidid rejects a peace agreement reached yesterday by 12 other clan leaders meeting in Cairo; the agreement calls for an all-party council to restore peace in the country.

March 17—Aidid meets in Nairobi for 3 hours of UN-mediated talks with rival clan leader Mohammed Ali Mahdi.

March 25—Operation Restore Hope, the US military-humanitarian action in Somalia that began in December 1992, ends with the withdrawal of the last American forces from Mogadishu; the remnants of the Italian and German contingents in the UN force are also withdrawing; 30 US troops were killed and 175 wounded during the mission. Some 19,000 UN peacekeeping troops remain in the country, where a war-induced famine that claimed an estimated 300,000 lives has ended.

March 28—Southern Somali groups allied with rival faction leaders Ahmed Omar Jess and Mohammed Said Hersi sign a peace pact in Nairobi concerning the southern port of Kisumu.

## SOUTH AFRICA

March 1—In Durban, Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi, the head of the Zulu-based Inkatha Freedom party, meets with African National Congress leader Nelson Mandela; they agree that Inkatha will "provisionally" register for the country's 1st free elections, scheduled for April 26–28; the official deadline for party registration, February 12, passed without the registration of Inkatha and several white separatist parties.

March 10—President Lucas Mangope flees Bophuthatswana, 1 of the so-called government-established "homelands" for blacks in South Africa, after protests against his refusal to open the homeland to the April elections.

Inkatha and a bloc of white separatists declare a halt to negotiations over registration for the April elections.

March 11—President F. W. de Klerk sends the army into Bophuthatswana to end rioting and drive out white separatists who had come to defend the homeland's independence; the death toll estimates range from 20 to 50 people, including several blacks killed by white vigilantes and at least 3 whites killed by black homeland security forces.

March 18—Judge Richard J. Goldstone, the chairman of a standing commission on violence, issues a report showing that senior officials of the South African police armed and assisted Zulu nationalists in a campaign involving partisan warfare, political hit squads, and terrorist attacks; witnesses said Lieutenant General Basie Smit, now second-in-command of the South African police, and Major General Krap-

pies Englebrecht, now the chief of counterintelligence, oversaw a network that provided weapons to Inkatha.

March 22—After a mutiny by homeland police and soldiers who feared the loss of their pension funds before the elections, the South African government takes control of Ciskei, the homeland of the Xhosa people.

March 28—Thirty-four people are killed in downtown Johannesburg in clashes between Zulu nationalist demonstrators, ANC security guards, and South African police officers during a demonstration by Inkatha Freedom party supporters opposed to the April elections. Officials from the ANC and Inkatha blame each other's parties for provoking the bloodshed.

March 31—De Klerk declares a state of emergency in KwaZulu, the Zulu homeland, and orders troops to protect political campaigning and balloting in the homeland and surrounding Natal province; troops will also take over the homeland's police force.

## UKRAINE

March 6—Sixty nuclear warheads, the 1st of Ukraine's arsenal of 1,600 shipped under a January agreement with Russia and the US, arrive in Russia for dismantling; US President Bill Clinton announced March 4 that the US would double aid to Ukraine for the process, to \$700 million.

March 25—Two days before the 1st parliamentary elections in independent Ukraine are to begin, President Leonid Kravchuk says in a televised speech that he wants parliament to give him special powers over the economy and law enforcement and wants to cancel early presidential and local elections scheduled for June, to avoid a "vacuum of power."

March 28—Results from yesterday's elections show that of the 49 races for seats in the new 450-seat parliament that were decided in the 1st round, centrists won 20; the Communist party, 12; moderate nationalist parties, including Rukh, 4; and the extreme nationalist Ukrainian National Assembly, 2. In a nonbinding referendum in the autonomous republic of Crimea, 70% voted for joint Ukrainian-Russian citizenship. More than 90% of participants in a referendum in the Donetsk and Lugansk areas voted to join the economic union of the Commonwealth of Independent States and to establish Russian as a 2d official language.

## UNITED KINGDOM

### Great Britain

March 13—In the 3d such incident in 5 days, mortar shells are fired from outside the grounds onto the tarmac and a terminal roof at London's Heathrow Airport but do not explode; the Irish Republican Army takes responsibility.

### Northern Ireland

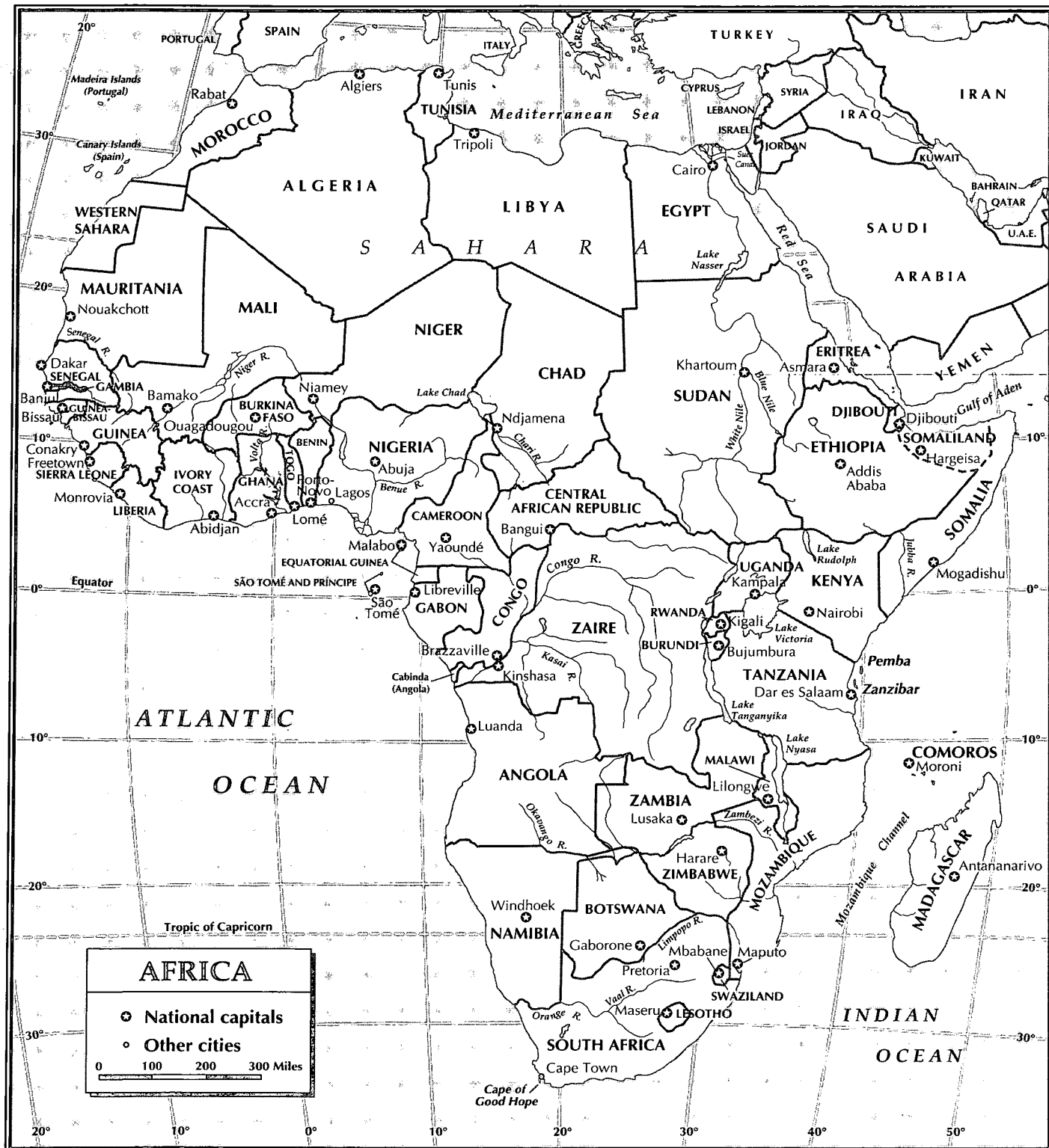
March 30—Responding to the British-Irish peace initiative proposed in December, the Irish Republican Army declares a 72-hour unilateral cease-fire—its 1st in 20 years except for ones at Christmas—to begin April 5.

## UNITED STATES

March 10—Daniel Buyon, a leader of the Haitian exile group Veye Yo, is shot and killed in Miami; Buyon is the 4th exile to be killed since 1991; all 4 were vocal backers of ousted Haitian president Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

The government announces it will allow US manufacturers to sell spy satellite technology to foreign buyers. ■





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